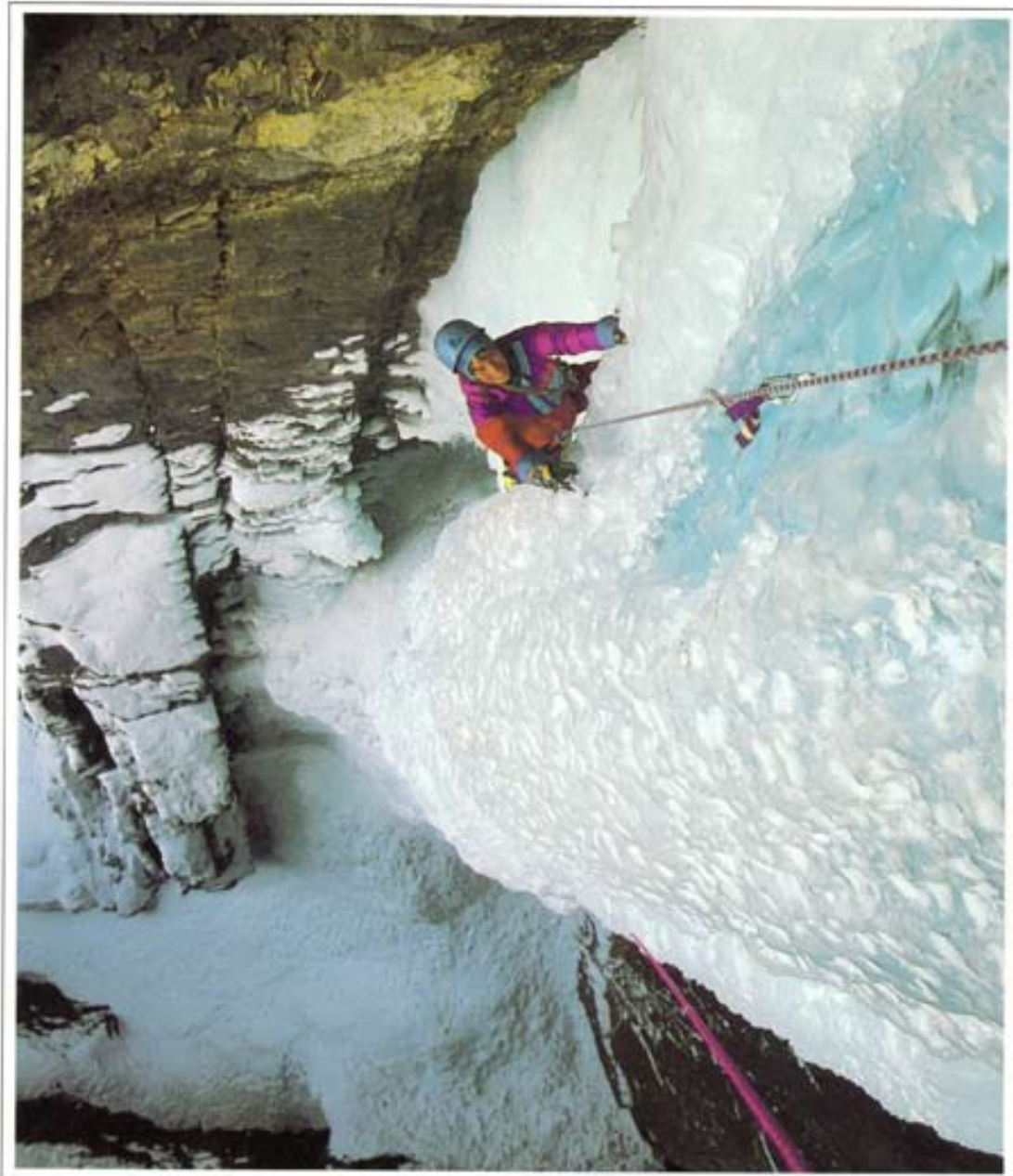


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# The Canadian Alpine Journal

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**INSTRUCTIONS TO CONTRIBUTORS** The Canadian Alpine Journal welcomes contributions from all interested readers, in either English or French. The ideal submission would be on a 3.5" disk in a Macintosh or DOS format, with a hard copy included. If you supply on disk, don't try anything fancy — no tabs, indents, etc. — we only have to undo them. If you can't get access to a computer, please type the submissions — reading a climber's writing can be near to impossible. Hand-written material may not be accepted.

Submission deadline is January 15, 1994.

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## Editorial - A Widening Eye

It used to be common practice in climbing to step on the shoulders of a partner to by-pass a difficulty or to see beyond a sticking point. In taking on the Journal, I've remained faithful to the tradition by taking advantage of the shoulders of David Harris, the previous editor. For this, I owe him a debt of considerable gratitude, and I'll take this opportunity to thank him also on behalf of you, the readers of the Journal. David managed to bring this publication into the modern era of publishing in just a few short years at the helm, and the result has brought considerable pleasure to many people. I couldn't be more pleased to follow in David's footsteps, though I have to acknowledge that some of the steps have been rather extended leaps for me.

The editorial path I'm committed to navigating is essentially a continuation of that begun by David, with an ever-widening focus on the Canadian mind and climbing scene, rather than simply cataloguing the achievements of the action of climbing. I believe this path is a correct one for several reasons. Foremost, we now live in a world where old rules and attitudes are no longer appropriate, and I feel it is essential that the Journal reflect this change. We share the territory of our mountains with an incredible variety of other users — this is increasingly clear in the last five years — and we consequently have to think about our actions more clearly, and in many instances, in completely new ways. The Journal should be the place where this change in consciousness is most graphically demonstrated because it continues to be the second-most public forum we have for our ideas; the first, of course, continues to be the way we practice our game.

Second, the Canadian Alpine Journal continues to be the primary vehicle for the Canadian climbing voice. In other countries with significant climbing populations, there are typically enough places to publish the art and ideas of climbing so that the national journals can be simple action records. This is clearly not the case in Canada; we have no other publications, and without the Journal representing the unique attributes of Canadian climbs and climbers, and the topography of the Canadian climbing mind, we will lose a great deal.

Finally, I feel that only the broadest focus can possibly do justice to the range of beauty and the depths of our mountains. I heartily call to any interested readers to join in this widening eye: read, write, take pictures — make this your Journal.



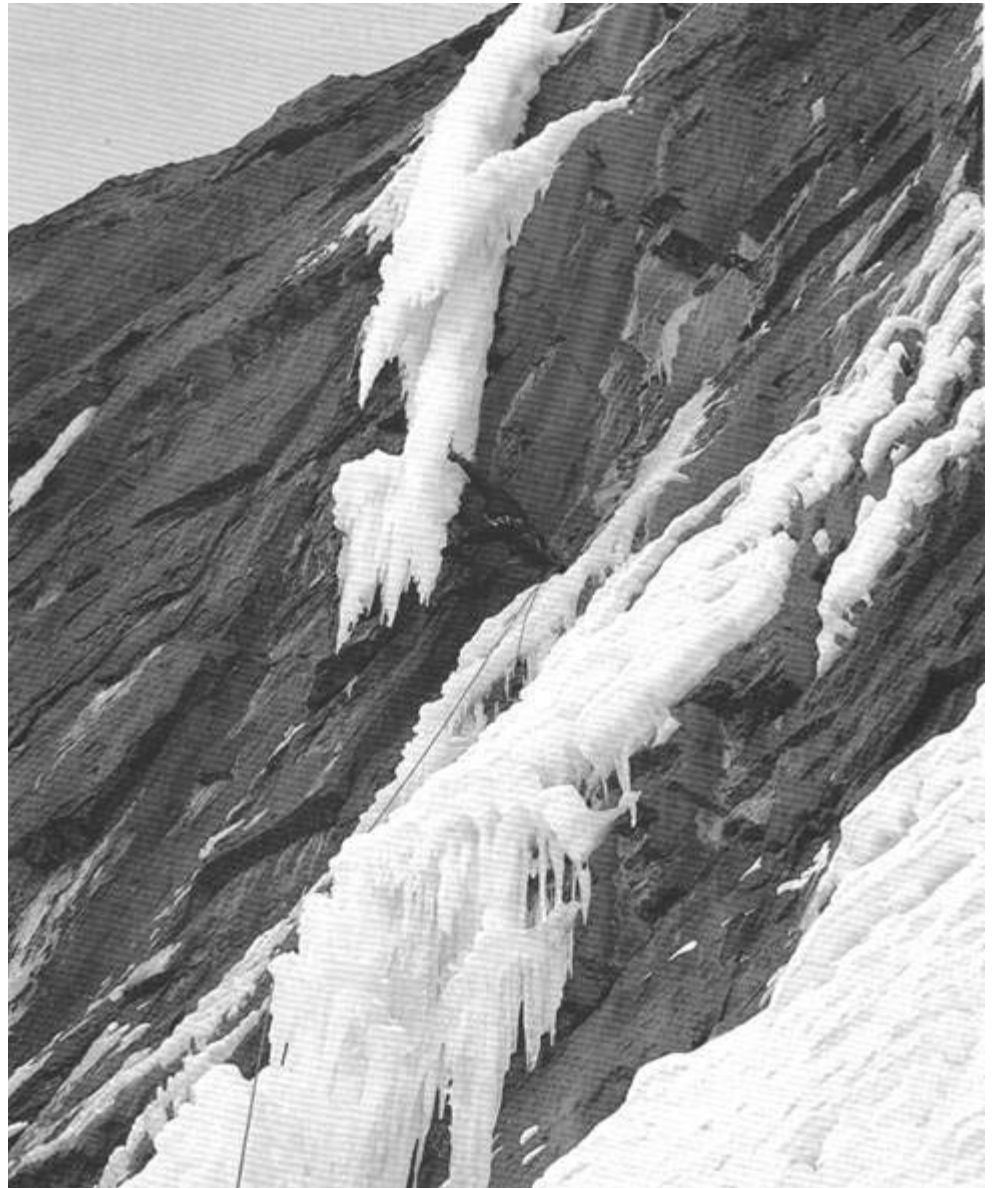
Front Cover: Joe Josephson on Malignant Mushroom, Ghost River, AB. Photo: Pat Morrow

Inside Front: Allison Andrews on White-man's Falls, Kananaskis, AB. Photo: Barry Blanchard

Above: The Whitemantle Range, BC. Photo: John Baldwin

Right: Jeff Everett on The Terminator, Banff, AB. Photo: Serge Angelucci

Back Cover: Jannu, Nepal. Photo: Ken Legg



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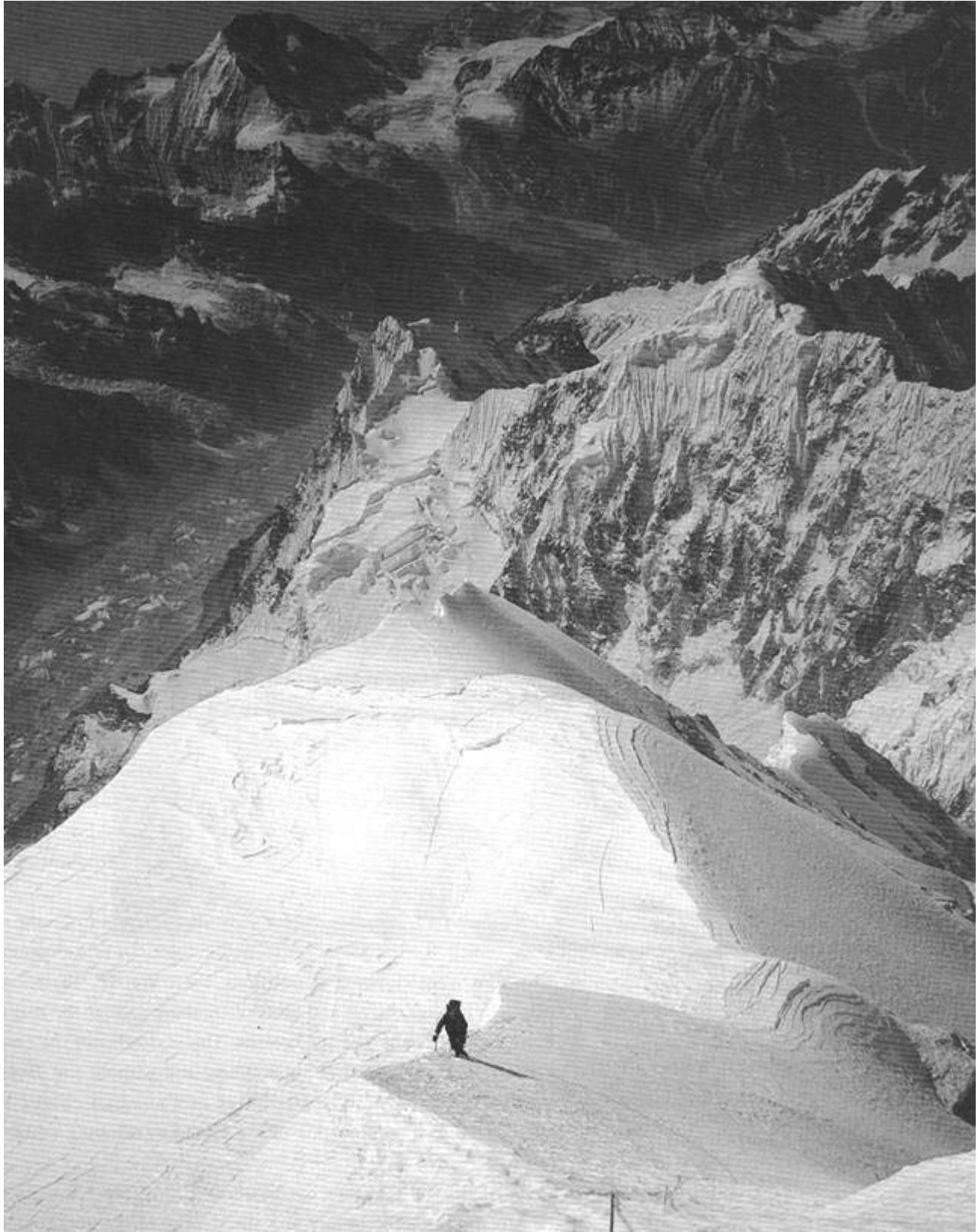
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Mike White follows the ridge above Camp 7, Jannu. Photo: Rob Driscoll.

# *At Grips With Jannu*

## The Second Generation

*Bill Durtler & Rob Driscoll*

THINK BACK TO 1988. It's dark, and the monsoon rains are pelting the streets. Even though the locals are used to the weather, there is not much activity outside. Inside the restaurant, four climbers are relaxing on the cushions on the floor, enjoying the slow but friendly service and excellent eastern food, keeping an eye on the belly dancer who is entertaining the enthusiastic guests. The long meal allows ample time for the climbers to discuss their reason for being there that evening: to select the "perfect" mountain for a small expedition. The climbers start by reiterating their definition of perfection: technically challenging; remote; seldom climbed (preferably never by Canadians); and relatively safe, both politically and objectively. They have done their homework, and many options are easily ruled out. The initial consensus is that the target will be somewhere in the greater Himalaya. Iran and Afghanistan are considered, but ruled out due to political instability. The USSR is too restrictive, Pakistan has potential but the approach is considered too boring, and India's mountainous areas are closed at the time due to Punjabi unrest. Bhutan is too expensive, as is China, so they settle on Nepal.

The remoteness criterion rules out peaks such as Pumori, Ama Dablam and the Annapurnas, but because the Kangchenjunga area is completely closed to trekking in 1988, it might fit the bill. A bit of research by one of the climbers suggests Kumbhakarna, or Jannu as it was named by the French, as the objective. Saskia Acton, Rob Driscoll, Ken Legg and Bill Durtler raise their glasses in a salute to adventure, companionship, and the perfect mountain. With the images of their dream mountain firmly burned into their imagination, the four climbers leave the Afghan Horsemen, get in their cars, and fight the Vancouver rain back to their regular lives, knowing that in four years they will be on their way.

Kumbhakarna is located in the far north-eastern corner of Nepal, just north of Kangchenjunga. It is 7710 m (25,300 feet) high, has significant amounts of technical climbing, but only short sections of objectively hazardous terrain. With its square summit head sitting on a pair of shoulder ridges, it forms a striking image seen from Darjeeling, and it is clearly visible and instantly recognizable during the flight in from Bangkok. The approach is a beautiful two-week trek through countryside that was first opened to organized and guided trekking only in 1990. The Canadian guide Frances Klatzel led the first trek into the area, and provided us with much information about the trek, as well as giving us a photo we used for promotion. As a bonus, we discovered it would be possible to make a jaunt over a high pass to allow a return trek through a completely different area.

The first ascent of Jannu was made by a very strong French party led by Lionel Terray in 1962; this is well documented in his excellent book *At Grips With Jannu*, which also chronicles an unsuccessful 1959 attempt. This book was the source of much of our information, inspiration, and trepidation. Descriptions of vertical ice walls, severe weather and difficult climbing both scared us and tempted us.

SINCE THE FIRST ASCENT, there have been 13 summittings, 10 of which followed the original route or variations. Jannu sprung into instant fame in 1989 after a solo of the North Face by Tomo

Cesen, who encountered 5.10 A2 rock and Grade 6 ice during his two-day round trip ascent of this 2,800-metre face. Another notable ascent was by a four-man British team, led by Alan Rouse, which completed the first alpine-style ascent in 1978. Ours would become the first North American ascent, after two American attempts.

The four years between conception and start of the expedition were typical of an undertaking of this magnitude: slacking off at the start, panic at the end. Our timing was jointly determined between Rob and Saskia finishing off their medical internships, and my wanting to go pre-monsoon, which was the only season I had not visited Nepal. We got our friend Tami Knight to design a T-shirt logo for us, based on her well-known cartoon rats. This was so well done that we ultimately sold an unheard-of 1000 shirts, which made a significant addition to our budget. We would still like to thank all of those who helped support us by buying a shirt. We also made application to the Canadian Himalayan Foundation for funding to cover our peak royalty fee and for use of their equipment stash in Kathmandu. We looked for equipment and food sponsors, we led our normal lives, and the trip seemed very far off, indeed.

The core climbing team consisted of Ken, Rob and myself. We had climbed together extensively throughout the Coast Range, as well as in the Rockies and popular American climbing areas, and knew that we could get along together under heavy stress. Realizing that a party of three was a bit small for a typical Himalayan expedition, we started looking for an additional three climbers. We felt that three ropes of two climbers would allow us to do the mountain in capsule style with a minimum of risk, while still giving every climber who was physically capable a shot at the summit. There were bound to be a dropout or two due to health or other reasons, so six seemed like a good number. After an extensive search, we added three people to the roster: Mike White, a fireman from West Vancouver; Richard Howes, a guide from Vancouver who spends much of his time in Europe, and Steve Langley, a computer consultant from Calgary. Saskia was still committed to the expedition, but because of her lack of "alpine mileage" she was considered a backup climber.

We also managed to convince six of our denser friends that coming along with our expedition would be the trip of their lives. We were up-front that one of the reasons for their accompaniment would be to provide us with financial support, but we decided that this would be accomplished by dividing up the fixed cost between a larger number of people, rather than by charging them a fee. This arrangement worked out well for all of us, since we didn't feel we had to babysit the trekkers, and they didn't feel they were getting ripped off. There would be two options for the trekkers: they could stay with the expedition and do shorter treks or maybe a trekking peak while we were on the mountain, or, if they didn't have that much time or patience, they could continue on back to Kathmandu after getting to basecamp.

With the climbing team in place, the departure date quickly approached. Last minute gear deals were made, food was bought, and general panic set in. We did manage to get ourselves together, however, and in late February 1992, we set off for Kathmandu.

After a mostly uneventful trip, we arrived in Kathmandu and

were greeted at the airport by Ken and Mike with the news that the Ministry of Tourism had not yet received the peak fee which had been wired about four weeks earlier. Rob had spent countless hours in the basements of all the banks, manually going through their ledgers, and was not a happy camper. This was one of the panic points we had to deal with, since we didn't have a \$3000 buffer in our contingency fund. After numerous faxes and phone calls to the bank in Calgary, the money finally "showed up". Where it went to is still a mystery, but we talked to several other expeditions that this also happened to. A cynic might start thinking that some sort of scam was going on.



Jannu. Photo: Bill Durtler.

ANOTHER, more difficult panic was the fact that Richard had not yet shown up, nor contacted us at all. Again, numerous faxes and phone calls were placed to his wife in Germany and anywhere else we could think of, but to no avail. We finally had to leave without him. (On our return we found out that he had been suffering major back problems.) With our climbing team now reduced to five members, we succumbed to pressure by our trekking agent to take along a couple of climbing Sherpas, and we welcomed Pasang and Tenzy. We also had seven trekkers along, so that our party size, with trekking staff, totaled about 22 people. The majority of trekkers were on tighter timetables than the climbers, and so were planning to spend just a few days at basecamp acclimatizing before carrying on. This required that they have their own support, so on the trek in we were doubled up on some staff, particularly in the kitchen, which resulted in some excellent meals.

After a week in Kathmandu, we chartered a bus for the 26-hour "bus ride from hell" to the end of the road at Basantipur, and because of the tiny seats, many of us spent the trip lying on the gear on the roof, hoping not to get bounced off in the middle of the night on the bumpy roads. At Basantipur we hired our porters, starting with about 70, since we had to carry virtually all our food in for the trek as well as for on the mountain. We elected to take the "full sendee" option for the approach, which meant we weren't supposed to worry about the financial terror of porter strikes (though we had one anyway), and we were completely catered.

Heather and Eric, two of the trekkers, had a whole duffel bag of Rollos and other assorted goodies, so we lived well on the trek in. The countryside was beautiful, though a bit dry at that time of year, and because few foreign parties visit the area we had a lot of interaction with the locals. In almost every village, we ended up playing frisbee or soccer or volleyball with the local kids, and once, Rob caused a commotion by hypnotizing a kid's rooster, a trick he had learned from a vet friend of his.

All good things come to an end, though; after two weeks of this bliss we finally arrived at basecamp at 4300 m. As basecamps go, this one was hard to beat. Grassy meadows, a little lake, protected from the wind, and surrounded by great-looking 6100 m peaks, most of them unclimbed. The only drawbacks were that we couldn't see Jannu, and it was a long and gruelling rock-strewn glacier stumble to get to the mountain.

We said goodbye to our trekking friends (with the exception of Saskia and David), and set to work. Over the next couple days we did repeated trips up and down the Yamatari glacier to a gear stash at 4900 m at the toe of the Providence glacier. From there we set up Camp 1, halfway up the Providence, just off the glacier against a 150 m cliff. This proved to be a hazardous spot. We stayed there two nights, and both mornings the kind of buzzing that makes climbers dirty their underwear heralded grapefruit-sized rocks landing within a few metres of the tents. By this time we were acclimatized enough to make the push from basecamp to the top of the Providence glacier in one long day, so we set up C2 below a massive icefall at 5300 m and vacated C1.

THE HAULING started in earnest now. Because the trip to C2 was almost completely non-technical, it became our advance base. Everybody helped carry loads up there — even our liaison officer and cook. While this hauling was going on, Mike, Rob and I were trying to find a way through the icefall above C2. The route confronted a 60 m steep wall, and then several km of jumbled and confusing, but mostly safe, glacier. Lots of dead-ends got us to the final sérac barrier, a 60 m high overhanging ice cliff that stretched from one side of the glacier to the other. We eventually decided that the only way through would be to climb the rock on the far left side of the glacier, and then up some steep ice to what we hoped would be the upper icefield. With this information, we handed the work over to Steve and Ken, and headed back to BC for a few rest days.

A word must be said about Ken at this time. A strong, silent type, he was our leader, in as much as any small group has a leader. He is the kind of guy who, a day after getting all four wisdom teeth pulled, goes on a 30-km solo backcountry ski traverse. Unfortunately, he was involved in a ski accident in January and broke a few ribs and bashed up his knee. By the time we got to Nepal he was back on his feet, but his ribs and knee were still bothering him. The ribs he could deal with, but there was a lot of up-and-down on the trek in, and so he was taking Advil to combat the inflammation in his knees. It turns out that a small percentage of the population is sensitive to Advil, and unfortunately, he turned out to be one of the sensitive ones. Ken, however, is not the type to advertise that he has a bleeding ulcer, so the rest of us took his bouts of lethargy and vomiting as mountain sickness, and as he

was one of the stronger climbers when moving, we didn't really probe too hard.

After the rest, Mike, Rob and I were back at C2. Ken and Steve had found a way to the upper icefield that involved quickly moving under a huge, overhanging sérac to a rock wall, climbing a few pitches of 5.4, then back on the ice for a couple of pitches. After orchestrating a grand finale of 6 m of good, but moderately overhanging ice (probably about WI4), the boys handed the task back to us. We completed a final pitch of 60° ice which led to a casual ramp across to C3 at 6000 m. The route between C2 and C3 had taken us a week to establish, but once we had marked it and fixed the tricky bits, it could be done in one long day.

The next days involved getting enough gear to C3 to allow us to go alpine style from there. During the hard days between C2 and C3, Steve decided that he wasn't acclimatizing quickly enough



Traversing before Jannu and the Dentelle. Photo: Rob Driscoll.

and that he wasn't mentally prepared to continue, but instead of bailing out for the beaches of Thailand, he coordinated the logistics between BC, C2 and C3. This was especially appreciated since we didn't have any radio communication. About this time, we found out about Ken's ulcer. He was having problems keeping food and fluids down, but was still as strong as any of us (except Mike, who is really a locomotive in disguise), and managed to convince us that he would be OK.

We also "lost" our Sherpas. Tenzing was too out of shape and had partied too much with the girls in the village below BC, and Pasang, who had been to 8400 m on Everest that winter, got quite sick — coincidentally just when he saw how desperate the rest of the route looked. This suited us fine however, since we really weren't sure how competent they would be on more technical terrain. We had considered taking Pasang along as a sixth, but when Steve dropped out, we decided we would be better off with just the four of us.

We spent a few days acclimatizing and fixing the first part of the route above C3. The first challenge was a relatively simple 'schrund, followed by a 150 m ice couloir which we fixed, with 40 to 50° ice on the steeper steps. Above that the ridge led on and up, with five distinct ice walls providing various mental and

physical challenges. The walls ranged from 15 to 90 m high and 60 to 95° steep. Luckily, the short walls were also the steepest, but in all cases, the ice would be superb except for the last three to five feet, which would be horrifying corn snow. Exciting stuff, at 6700 metres!

We climbed in pairs, with the first climber leading a pitch and fixing a line at the top of each wall. The rest of us would jug the line, and the last person would clean up the anchors and add any required sections of fixed line. As much as possible, we used fixed line left behind by previous expeditions, since we had under 1000 m ourselves. While this method was efficient, we didn't do that much "real" climbing, even though the route was quite technical here.

This routine went on for three days, and finally, the day came to go for it. We said goodbye to Steve, packed our sacks with five days of food and fuel, some screws and pins, a hundred metres of fixed line for the descent, tent, sleeping bag and foamy, and as little warm clothing as we thought we could get away with. We still ended up with 20 to 30 kg on our backs, which makes juggling overhanging ice less than fun.

Even with the route to C4 mostly fixed, it was still slow going, and there were still hours of unexplored terrain before we got to C4. C4 was placed in a crevasse right on the ridge, on what the French called the Tête du butoir, at about 6700 m. The weather was holding out well, but we could see huge wind plumes blowing off the summit, and there were big cloud build-ups in the valleys below us.

The next morning saw an early start, with a quick breakfast. This was a very technical day, with lots of up and down over steep ice, route-finding difficulties, and some mixed ground. At one point my footing didn't seem too solid, and I looked down to find that the back screw of my right crampon had disappeared. I was able to repair it with a piece of shoelace for a while, and later we found a screw that sort of fit, but doubts were starting to crowd my mind. The climbing

crux of that day was a 100 m corner of 60° ice followed by a traverse around and through an overhanging cornice, which was led in fine style by Mike. A bit more climbing got us to the top of the Tête de la Aentelle where, exhausted, we set up C5. Total net distance traveled that day: 200 m vertical and 500 m horizontal.

That night Ken started having real problems. He needed an injection of Graval to calm his stomach down enough to get some food into it, and even with the drug, he probably retched half the food. Still, when we got up the next morning, we all continued on. Whether this decision came from the mental cloud of altitude, I don't know, but I'm sure it would have been unlikely that any of us would have made the decision to continue if we had been on a trip in the Rockies.

The next section was very straight-forward glacier travel. For the most part, we were on very firm névé that allowed quick travel (even if the lack of oxygen didn't). Every once in a while we would come across a patch of old snow that hadn't blown away, and movement would slow to a crawl here, for the crust would barely support body weight. In addition, as we got higher, the wind started to get worse and worse. It wasn't a constant wind, but rather would go from dead calm to 100 km/h in a matter of seconds, with a loud roar providing brief warning. We were blown off our feet

several times, and as the terrain was getting steeper below the final ice headwall, we decided to put up C6 in a somewhat sheltered crevasse. Chopping out tent platforms was a long and tedious task because the snow was so hard, and setting up the tents was a two-man job, with one of us holding on for dear life while the other slotted the poles. Once the tents were up, they were bolted down with every ice axe, screw and picket we could spare.

Ken was losing it rapidly by this time. He was my climbing and tent partner, and I would guess that he was getting in about a half litre of fluid, mostly hot chocolate, in a day. By contrast, the rest of us were trying to down about six litres. With his weakening, I was losing confidence in my partner's ability to hold me in the event of a fall, and with the high winds and makeshift crampon repairs I had little confidence in my own ability not to fall. When Rob and Mike got up at 3 a.m. for a push, I decided to stay behind with Ken and wait for them.

The boys eventually came back after dark, with the prognosis that the upper rock band looked very feasible, and that it would take a two-day push to get to the summit. Ken was starting to lose his mental capabilities, and Rob, as the team doctor, was very concerned about the possibility of kidney failure. A decision was reached that the next morning I would descend with Ken while Mike and Rob pushed for the summit. Given my state of mind at the time, I was happy with that decision, and in reality no other could have been made.

I'll let Rob tell the summit story from here:

CAMP 6 — 7100m. I sleep fitfully, anticipating the long summit push tomorrow. Too soon, my alarm announces 0300h. The winds have not died down and Mike and I struggle to brew and dress in the cramped tent. Bill had answered our wake-up call, but by 0520h we are starting up the steepening slope alone, our tent now collapsed and stashed in the snow to prevent it from blowing away.

We climb in the cold predawn for an hour or so to a spot where we think we can cross the bergshund easily, but we are forced to rappel to the bottom and climb back out — a waste of precious time and energy. Once on the face, Mike begins a series of long run-outs up the 45° ice. It is blue and extremely hard and our screws are choked with frozen ice, dulled from repeated use. Mike curses in frustration as he tries to protect the lead.

After 90 minutes, we see a lone figure emerge from the tent far below us. Eventually, we recognize Ken as he races up the slope, collapses, then repeats the process. We aren't sure what he is trying to do, but finally we establish voice contact and learn that he has more gear for us. We yell that we don't need it and he retreats to the tent. A magnificent gesture of support given his weakened

state; he had just spent a second night above 6700 m vomiting and really should have been on his way down. Mike and I continue up the ice face finally arriving at the site of the original French Camp 6 at 1100h. Slow going indeed.

We are now on the shoulder of the demon facing the 300 m rock headwall that bars us from the summit snowslopes. We climb a beautiful arête and then a rising rock traverse, to the base of the ice towers which turned the French back in 1959. At one point we pass an empty O2 cylinder and it reminds me how short of breath I am, but the cylinder looks heavy and I'm thankful not to be carrying it. Mike traverses the ice towers quickly and by 1400h finds the entrance to a narrow couloir which we hope will lead us through the rock band. Two hours pass almost in an instant. We are still moving up the couloir and there is no sign of an exit onto the summit snowslopes.



Ken Legg climbing to the Tête du Butoir. Photo: R. Driscoll.

At 1610h, we decide that to continue will mean an inevitable bivy and the thought is not appealing. I'm already wearing everything I've got, including a pile jacket and a down parka under a Gore-Tex climbing suit, yet I still feel the wind cut right through me. Sadly, we begin our retreat and after a long series of rappels, half of them in the dark, we reach camp at 1930h. We are very cold and frustrated, and now face a half-hour struggle to erect our tent. We finally escape the wind and manage a limited brew before falling asleep.

At 1000h the next morning, we discuss plans with Bill and Ken. Bill informs us that Ken has spent a third night vomiting and has drunk very little and eaten less. While he shows no other signs of edema, he is growing rapidly weaker. He needs to descend immediately. I'm torn between my summit ambitions and guilt because I know my friend is seriously ill, and as the expedition M.D. I should be descending. Finally, we decide that Bill will escort Ken down while Mike and I will try to establish Camp 7 at 7350 m (the site of the original French Camp 6) in hopes of making one last attempt at the summit tomorrow.

At 1445h, we say good-bye to Ken and Bill and watch them quickly disappear down the Throne Glacier. With the departure of my two friends, I am left with a sense of isolation and self-doubt. The wind is now so strong it is blowing our fully loaded packs along the ledge, but we know the route and figure it should only take a couple of hours to reach the shoulder.

Two pitches up the ice face we watch the sun set behind Makalu. The temperature plummets as the moon rises and casts silver streaks across the ice. I've never been so cold in my life. I secretly pray Mike will suggest retreat and he later admits he hoped I would do the same, but neither of us do, and so we struggle upward. Exhausted by the 14h summit bid yesterday and now

burdened by full packs, we make very slow progress in the dark. We finally establish Camp 7 at 2030h on a small ledge. Shortly after we lay down, the outside of the ledge collapses and I'm left hanging in a fold of tent. I spend the night listening to Mike sleep and the tent flap.

By 0900h we are moving up the arête again. The weather is still clear, but we can see a long plume of snow blowing off the summit ridge. We are confident we will be on the summit early in the day given our knowledge of the route and our footsteps in the couloir. Day 24 on the mountain and only 400 m to go. I climb in a dream world. My only touch with reality is the rope leading out in front of me. Mike never seems to tire and it's all I can do to follow his steps.

Shortly before 1600h, we reach the summit ridge. It is knife-edged, with a drop of over 2000 m down the north face and over 700 m down to the Throne Glacier. It is just as in the photos in At Grips with Jannu and I can picture Lionel Terray a cheval on the ridge. Soon, we are just one pitch from the summit, but the going is no easier. Mike leads the steep traverse placing a couple of ice stakes en route to the tiny snow pyramid.

He is the first North American on the summit of Kumbhakarna. He belays me over and we shake hands before he squeezes aside. There is only room for one at a time on the tiny pinnacle of ice. He photographs me with the Canadian flag, but the howling wind promptly snatches it from my hand, and it disappears somewhere over the north face. It is 1615h. To the west, the sky is turning orange behind Makalu. To the north, Kangchenjunga rises another 800 m above us, and more than 3000 m below us is the Yamatari Glacier and Basecamp. The elation and pride of completing such an enormous challenge is tempered by sadness as my friends Bill and Ken are not here to share the victory. The preeminent emotion, however, is one of relief and I'm just so thankful I can finally go down.

Near the summit, we find an orange ice axe tied to some old perlon line. I'm reminded of the ice-axe left on the summit of Mount Alberta and decide to bring it down with me. The descent is a blur and by the time we reach Camp 7 in the dark, the ice axe is gone. With the loss of the flag, the ice axe, and our later discovery that only one summit photo survived — we are left with only a few oxygen-starved memories of our brief summit visit.

The winds on the shoulder are so fierce that after an hour, we have managed only to erect the body of the tent. We are unable to brew at all as the tent flattens with each gust. We estimate the temperature at -30° C and the winds at 40 km with even stronger gusts. We have had only 1.5 litres of fluid between us all day, but we are happy and too tired to care.

I wake with a sense of overwhelming isolation. We are the only two left on the mountain. I just want to get down to friends and safety. We strip the mountain of gear and as much fixed line as we can manage and make it to Camp 3 where we enjoy our first windless night in ages.

THE MORNING when Rob and Mike pushed on towards C7 just below the summit rock wall, Ken and I lethargically slept in,



Climbers at the base of the Dentelle Couloir. Photo:Rob Driscoll.

and then packed up during lulls in the wind and headed down.

It was a slow process. I had all of the communal gear to lighten Ken's load, so we were fairly evenly matched. We made it back to C4 that day, and the next day only to C3, where we spent the second night and picked up even more gear. On the descent to C3 we could see two little dots on the summit ice wall. It was about 3 p.m., and Rob and Mike were still ascending.

Our descent continued. A quick stop at C2, and then on the long descent to BC. We hit the rocky Yamatari glacier just before dark, and by moonlight, headlamp and distant lightning flashes stumbled back to camp. This was one of the hardest days I've ever had. Ken had to be constantly encouraged to continue on, and we both had our own little mantras to get one foot in front of the other. Occasionally, one of us would trip and fall, and it would be very tempting just to stay there.

FROM THE TOP of the moraine it was an easy descent to camp, but we just dropped our packs and yelled. We were greeted with joy and relief, but also worry, since nobody had known what was going on. We made it back to the basecamp tent, where we were fed and served endless cups of tea, and then we crawled into our bags and slept.

The next evening, Rob and Mike made it back, frostbitten and badly sunburnt, but they had reached the summit. Their story is best told by one of them. However, to put things in perspective they did the descent from C7 to BC in two days, compared to our three days from C6.

The next couple of days were really hard for me. I had to come to grips with my retreat, and in my depression I was not good company. I seriously contemplated soloing the route, or failing that, one of the 6700 m peaks outside of basecamp. I didn't resent Ken (at least not much), but instead was upset at myself for my own perceived weakness. It is very difficult for me to express the sense of letdown that I experienced. Rob and Mike stated that relief was the emotion they felt when they got to the top; they could descend now, it was over. Part of my agonizing was that I (as had Rob and Ken, and to a lesser extent Mike) had put so much into this trip over the preceding four years. You build dreams, and they do not include turning back 350 m below the top, when you know you can go on. But the big thing, I think, was the self doubt: did



I really have the “right stuff to pull through when the going gets tough? There is no question in my mind that I did the only thing I could have done; Ken would probably have died if we hadn’t gone down when we did. There is also no question that I had a lot of good reasons to have doubts about my ability to continue under the circumstances: the broken crampon; the high winds; the sick partner. The nagging doubt is: what would have happened if Ken had been strong? I tell myself I would have made it, but...

UNFORTUNATELY for my budding Himalayan solo career, the next night it snowed 30 cm (after we cleaned the camps), heralding the start of the monsoon — so climbing anything was out of the question. To reinforce that point, we saw some awesome avalanches off the peaks across the glacier, and to make my mood a bit better, our mail runner came in with a big bag of goodies.

We spent the next few days packing up, including a complete clean-up of the garbage piles behind the cooking area. This took the whole team, including most of the remaining staff, a whole day; we filled 50 large orange garbage bags with all kinds of junk. These were brought down to the glacier, where they were dumped into a shallow crevasse and covered with rocks, where they would be mulched to bits over the five hundred years or so it will take them to make it to the toe.

The rest of the trip, while not uneventful, was of little mountaineering interest. Doing double trekking days the whole way, it took us a week to get to the first big town, where we treated ourselves to haircuts, shaves and tomba (fermented millet). There are rampant rumours about Steve’s behaviour after imbibing five pots of the rather potent alcoholic drink, but I’m sworn to secrecy on that. We finished up in Kathmandu with a fantastic supper and then went our own ways, some back to work in Canada, others to travel in the Far East.

For me, this has been a very positive inner learning experience. When I got off the mountain, I swore I would never, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever do another Himalayan expedition. I’ve since come to peace with myself and my own personal “failure”. We did a big, fairly difficult Himalayan peak, we did it in good style with a small team, we all got off alive, and we’re all still friends. The countryside was beautiful, the people unbelievably friendly, and my slides turned out well. By now, I’m down to only a one or two “ever”s, and once again in pursuit of adventure, companionship, and the perfect mountain. No matter how easy you take it or how hard you push it, and no matter how blemished your “perfect” mountain really is, the three will always go together.



Mike White on the summit of Jannu. Photo: Rob Driscoll.

# *Ama Dablam - The Clean Way*

*Kobus Barnard*

The bus hits a bump and my gut ache throbs. Last night in Kathmandu I had a fever so high that I was hallucinating. Last week I parted with a mountain of money, including my share of \$2000, deposited into the bowels of a third world bureaucracy, recoverable only if we proved that we left the hills clean. This was a new rule, inflicted upon us at the last minute, adding to the immense stress and effort which brought us where we are: sick and broke on a bus, on a rainy day, in the middle of nowhere.

Why would a humble, not particularly talented, recreational climber go to the Himalaya to climb? Good question. Trekking I can understand. For much less money and effort you get the views, you get to see the place, and you get to be warm most of the time. Climbing, on the other hand, requires vague philosophical contortions to balance books which are immensely lopsided in favour of staying home. Although I can go on and on about things like personal discovery through pushing oneself, and the fun of doing wild things in wild places, the truth of the matter is that I don't know why I answered "Yes" to the invitation to go. But I did know, right from the beginning, that I could not say "No."

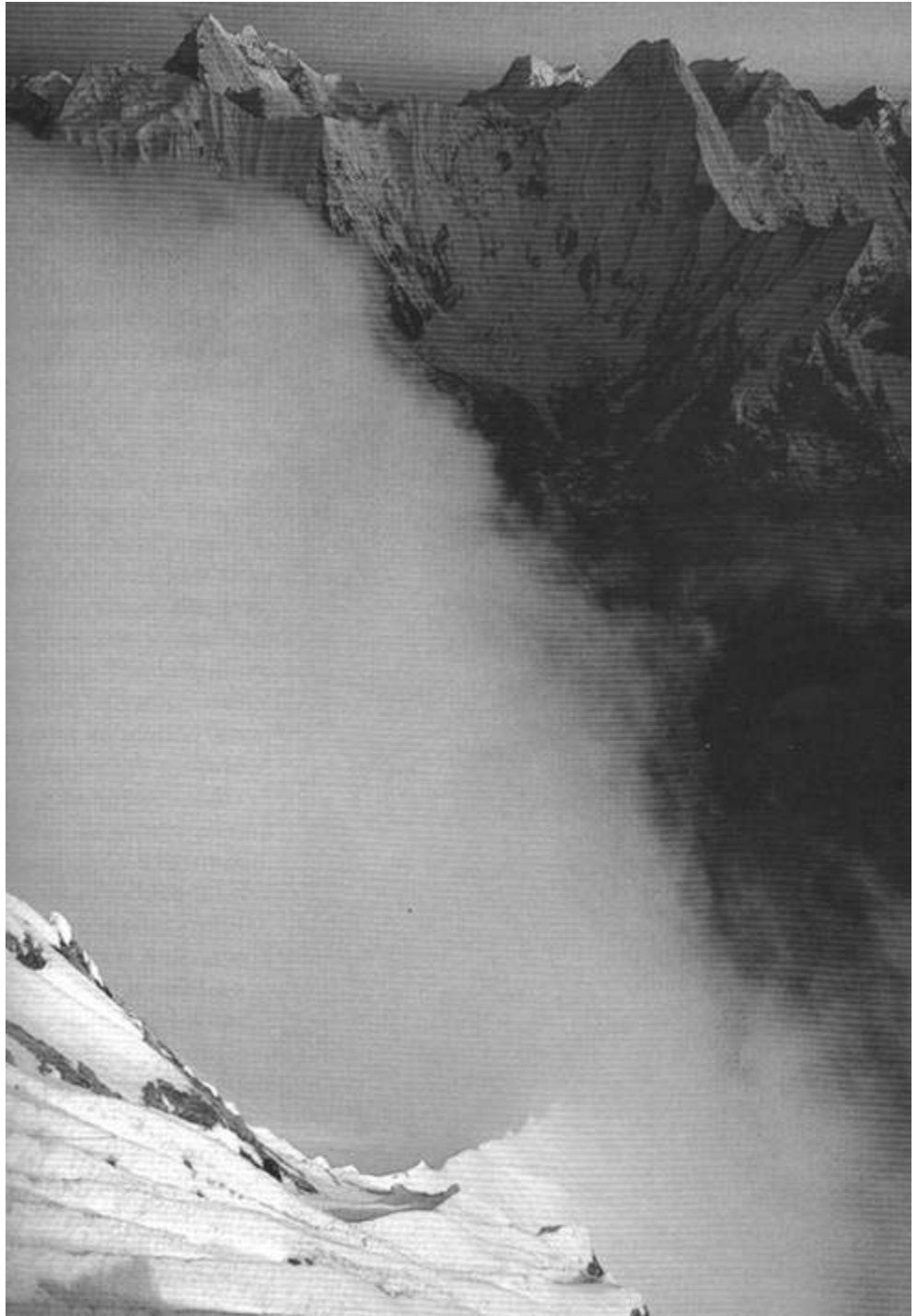
The plan involved a trek into the Everest region of Nepal, followed by an ascent of Imja Tse (Island Peak). Finally, well acclimatized, some of the group would attempt the second ascent of Ama Dablam's South-East, or Lagunak Ridge, as it was called on the first ascent by an American party. Being a Himalayan (and high-altitude) novice, I figured that the standard route on the South-West Ridge would perhaps be a more reasonable objective, but in hindsight the route choice was bang on. The original planning (organization is too strong a word) was done by our leader Richard Howse. The other Ama Dablam climbers were Matt Godbold and Ray Vran from Australia.

Confusion ruled upon our arrival. At the airport, guys dressed in dirty grey grabbed for our baggage, we struggled into a cab and began driving in the middle of the road, swerving around cows, rickshaws, and pedestrians, honking every few seconds at nothing, in standard Nepalese driving etiquette. We switched hotels, trying to pick up two more trekkers, and explored Kathmandu. We were accosted continuously: "Hello, change money?"; "Hello, buy hashish?"; "Hello, buy knife?"; "Hello, buy Tiger Balm?" Negotiations with our trekking

agent went on forever. This was the strangest beginning to a trip I had ever known.

"Definitely not the Coast Range," I thought to myself, as I was served tea in bed by a member of our staff. So far, various efforts to climb Imje Tse, our acclimatization peak, had failed. Would we have to move onto the "real" objective having already failed on a trivial 6000 m bump? Fortunately, due to improving weather and conditions, we were spared this embarrassment, putting all nine Himalayan hopefuls on top at the last minute. Phew!

Now it was time to focus on Ama Dablam. Could we handle it?



Matt Godbold seconding the summit flutes, Ama Dablam. All photographs in this article: Kobus Barnard.

Would it be safe enough? Would the altitude give us problems? I thought back to Thyangboche where an intensely loud, olive-green military helicopter had picked up the body of a Korean climber. The victim of either ignorance or machismo, he rushed to get high and died from the effects of altitude at a not very high altitude at all. The smell of the jet fuel and the intense sound seemed out of place in the unbelievably clear morning, as did the tragedy amidst healthy individuals celebrating life.

I REMEMBERED PHERICHE: we were just beginning to think of the Korean death as an isolated incident, when dinner was interrupted by three guys carrying a Nepalese high-altitude porter dying of altitude sickness. We placed him in a Gamow bag, and he improved dramatically. Richard, Ray, and Simon (a medic from a British army expedition) took first watch. The rest of the team went to bed, anticipating a carry-out the next morning. It was not to be — another absolutely clear morning brought news of death. Richard matter of factly described the final moments, with CPR hampered by pulmonary fluid, and the knowing look in the victim's eyes as he died. A second preventable tragedy in the space of a week. The trio who brought this fellow down had found him gasping for breath in a tea house in the presence of the Korean party who had already lost a member! In each case the victim did not go down far enough soon enough, and in each case there were people available to help them get down. I always assumed that climbers died of altitude sickness either in bad weather, or on terrain that compromised rescue efforts, not on AI trails with plenty of help all around!

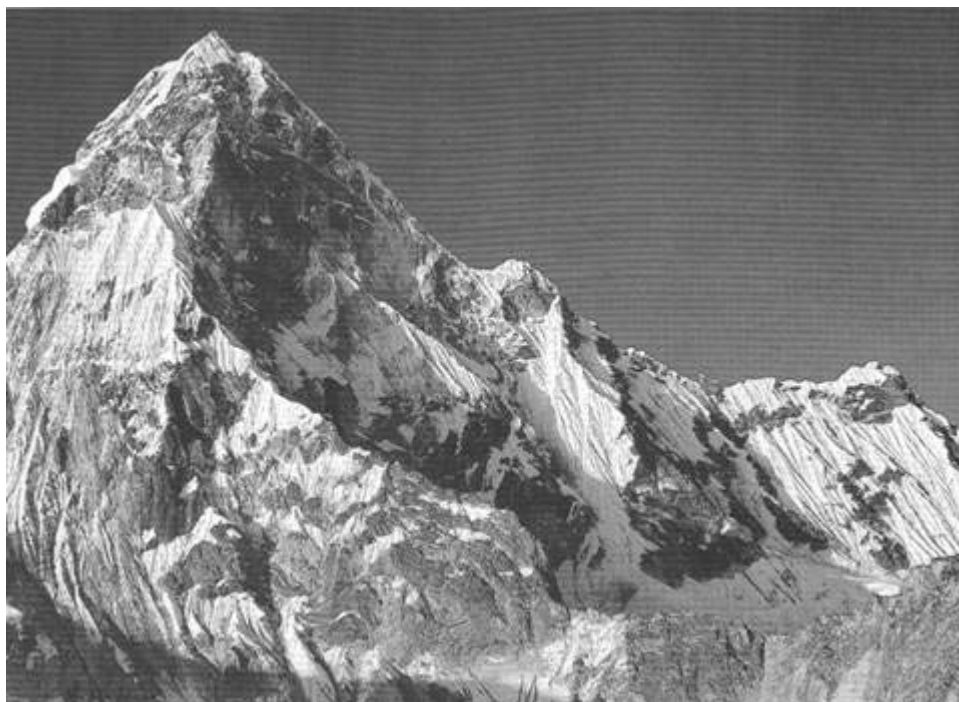
Our strategy of taking plenty of time to acclimatize seemed to be paying off, I thought to myself, as I bounced up the trail towards Ama Dablam, but—Hang on!

“What the hell is basecamp doing here?” I asked.

“The yak herder refused to go any further.” Richard replied.

“Look on the bright side. This is a paradise,” Ray added.

“Sure it's a paradise, but it is a useless paradise.” I retorted, anticipating losing time finding a new basecamp, and playing porter to get our loads up to it.



The South Face of Ama Dablam, with the Lagunak Ridge in the foreground.

So, it was another week before we were ready to climb; then, it was time to sink some tools! As we are not hardmen, we had brought along a whole bunch of rope to fix the first half of the route. So, we went up, and we went down. Up and down. Up and down. Up and fucking down! And then we went up.

AT THE POINT where the ridge abuts onto the face, we were well above the fixed lines. It was getting late, and it was beginning to snow. We had not seen any bivvi site on the way up, and none was available here. Ray had seen what was possibly a cave 70 m below. Normally one would write this off, but in the previous camp Richard had cleared some ice at the base of a snow mushroom, and discovered an amazing ice cave with all sorts of passages and wonderful ice formations, so Ray and I rapped down to check this one out as well. We bashed our way into another world. Imagine: You are on a 55° ice slope and then you crawl through a hole onto flat ground, protected from the wind, snow, and exposure. All around you is a delicate mass of perfect hexagonal ice crystals, several feet thick. We called our home the Crystal Palace. In it we found a French food wrapper. Interesting! The only other party that had been on this route reported only miserable bivvis. Although they did mention a fantastic cave, they found it only after they joined the standard route. Perhaps the cave location was mis-reported? Or perhaps someone snuck the route?

The rock is like clay. Always, near the end, when the light is fading, things get tricky. Stemming between ice and clay, I place a pick in snow. Nope; try a glove on rock. Better! I'm out of rope? “Well, I'm not betraying here - you guys start climbing.” I heave myself onto the rib. No stance, no anchors. Ten feet up, the rock is more solid. The sun has set. I bring Richard up to the hanging stance. While I belay Ray up, Richard takes the lead (with his seconding pack) on a single 9 mm rope. I'm letting one rope out, taking the other in. The tangle is growing. The light is fading. Arriving at the hanging station, Ray is unbearably uncomfortable wearing his pack while belaying Matt. Any attempt by Ray to get comfortable locks Richard's rope. I'm sure the rope is being cramponed repeatedly. Richard started on good ice, but now he is on

bad snow, and his steps are disintegrating as he tries to hurry. Finally he is over the crest, but needs snow stakes from below to set up an anchor. He gets really cold while we untangle the rope so Ray can climb. He does so without his pack due to the marginal belay. Ray's pack jams on hauling.

Finally everybody and their gear is at the bivvi site, having connected with the standard route. By the time we get to sleep it is 2 a.m.

The next morning we offered tea to people trudging up the standard route.

This way up is not easy, but it sees many parties, and it is often guided. This year, the route turned back several attempts until one of the guides fixed a rope to the top. Then the flood gates were open, and people summited daily. Once we found the energy to follow the steps it took only an hour to make the summit. The views were great and it was warm enough to spend



A climber descends the Southwest Ridge.

a fair amount of time taking pictures and admiring ourselves. In contrast to our leisurely stay on the summit, once we turned around there was no wasting time. We imagined ourselves zipping down a nicely prepared route, and then lying in the meadows. Soon!

Reality is never quite like that! The frayed 7 mm polypro rope we followed into the dark did not inspire confidence. The anchors were at least as bad. Old fixed lines emerged from the snow and re-entered again a few feet lower down. These sections were used as the “anchors” for the new fixed line. Working by headlamp we traversed and rappelled, traversed and rappelled. We came upon many places where there were many ropes, not all of them going the same way! No doubt it would have been easier if we had been this way before, if there was light, if we were not so tired!

In the daylight the crowds and the mass of garbage, old fixed lines and shitty anchors, brought home the point that this beautiful line up this elegant peak was trashed. Being able to contrast the two routes underlined the importance of cleaning our fixed lines. It went beyond the \$2000, which we could get back regardless of how we treated our route, since our Liaison Officer never got near the route and never saw our fixed lines. Although we had always intended to collect our junk, we were even more committed now. The reality of this commitment was sobering. Matt and Ray had to leave right away, which left the bulk of the cleanup for Richard and I, but we did not have much time either. The bottom line was that I would have to clean between Camps 2 and 3 in a single day, and Richard would have to clean up to Camp 2 the following day. In addition, many loads would have to be carried down, taking at least three hours. At least we weren't tired — oh no!

**DARKNESS.** I had saved weight on the way up. I have no warm clothes. I'm using the fixed lines I'm cleaning for rappelling. This meant that I had just rapped from two 150 m ropes, on varied, mixed terrain, not all of it particularly steep. That's right. I'm on a sloping stance with 300 m of rope, all of it tangled up. My back and stomach muscles are aching from the heavy, poorly packed pack. Metre by metre I work through the tangles. I would soon find out if we were really committed to cleaning up. Perhaps an

hour later, I make another rappel, and face another tangle. The pack gets noticeably heavier with each rope I claim, and with each cache I collect. I must be masochistic, because I clean some of the previous party's lines that we had not pulled on the way up. Finally, I reach Camp 2, and I can descend without having to clean, but throughout the descent my back and stomach muscles arc screaming from controlling the heavy pack while hanging from a harness. I crawl into advance base camp at 2:30 a.m.

The next day Richard did the cleaning while I carried loads. I got back to advanced base after dark to collect my second load, and Richard was still way up there, working by headlamp. I decided I should take his stuff back, hoping that he could do the rest in a single load, because we were to break basecamp the next morning. I got back to base at 11 p.m. Our cook-boy heard me come in and made me dinner — what a saint. Richard did not make it back until 8:30 the next morning! We were already

packed. He said there was one more load, and there was only one candidate to carry it. Groan! Even though it nearly killed me, I'm glad that we left the route roughly in the condition we found it. Ama Dablam is a beautiful mountain, with beautiful lines. All were worth climbing originally but now, one is trashed. If you want to do one that is not, consider the “Lagunak Ridge”. It is not that much more difficult than the standard route, only more sustained. Just keep it clean.

#### Notes

The summit of Imja Tse was reached in late October by Richard Howse, Matt Godbold, Ray Vran, Kobus Barnard, Emily Butler, Russ Turner, Kwon Kim, Dave Wilkinson, and Nancy from Connecticut. Emily Butler



The team ascending fixed ropes.

also made an ascent of Pokalde, another trekking peak. The summit of Ama Dablam was reached on November 1 by Richard Howse, Matt Godbold, Ray Vran, and Kobus Barnard.

Thanks to: Pelion Mountain Products, who supplied us with fine Serratus Super Guide packs, and large bags for porter loads (these items are now available to other expeditions through the

Canadian Himalayan Foundation); Mountain Safety Research, who supplied us with stoves, snow stakes and water filters; Lipton foods; the makers of Pemmican bars; and the makers of Cold Buster Bars, each of which helped us with the most important item of mountaineering gear: food; Lamjung Treks and Expeditions for their fine service and support during our entire stay in Nepal.

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## *Manaslu*

### A Lightning Sky

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*Geoff Powter*

*I HAVE THIS DREAM, of lapis heavens, and an endless bowl of porcelain snow; a dream which can melt the coldest day. In it, there is no wind, no sound but the rake of my own breathing. Beyond me are Dhaulagiri, Annapurna, Shishipanjima, the Great Tibetan Plateau. These are the threads of the dreams I have had forever, woven into the fabric of this new reverie. I stop to wait for one partner, and am whispered up by the ghosts of countless others. I am joyed to see them gathered here, in such a beautiful place. I have missed all of them...*

THE GREAT HORSESHOE that is Manaslu on its north-east side looms like a magnificent stadium, with the ice towers of Manaslu, Manaslu North, and Naike Peak cupping the subtle swell of the Manaslu Glacier. The glacier gently dips eastward from the hands of the peaks towards a basecamp balanced on the end of a moraine, spying on the terraces below. There, the glacier suddenly spills vertically downwards in shards of ice, like a waterfall frozen at the moment of its greatest torment. This breach disconnects the mountain from the rest of the world, and strangely suggests the peak is the safest place to be. On this field, in September and October of 1992, we six Canadians (team leader Mike Galbraith, Denis Brown, Peter Tucker, Dave Chase, John Knight and myself) played out our strange little game with six of our own support staff, twelve Koreans and their nineteen Sherpas, and an international team of Poles, Italians, Bulgarians, and Belgians whose number we never could figure out. We followed the standard North-East Face route on Manaslu, first established by a Japanese team in 1956. The line is a great, sweeping arc which begins at basecamp on the northeast end of the Manaslu Glacier, rises all the way to its western head, then steeply climbs kilometres back to the summit high above the south-east end of the glacier. It traces a path like the rising curve of a roulette ball climbing its bank.

Manaslu, the world's eighth highest peak, was a mountain which came to us with dire warnings attached. Distances, both horizontal and vertical, were said to be enormous — even more than one might rightly expect from an 8000 m peak. The objective hazard was said to be unjustly high as well, as the leader of the Korean team could personally testify: he had lost both a father and a

brother on the same route in 1972 and 1976; thirteen people had been killed in one avalanche on the second Korean trip. Winds and weather were said to be bitterly unpredictable, as the massif of Manaslu is squeezed between the Deccan Plateau to the south and the Tibetan Plateau to the north. People actually warned us away from this route, saying we had too small a team, not enough experience, and that the mountain itself was somehow “bad.” Yet, when we reached just 30 m below the main summit of Manaslu, and the same day stood on the summit of Manaslu North, all this fatalistic foretelling seemed absurd. For that moment, and really for the whole trip, this climb was really what a lifetime in the mountains could be about. For us, Manaslu was a magnificent, sometimes intimidating, but ultimately nurturing Goddess; sadly, for the others on the hill who became our friends, the mountain lived up to its reputation just a few days later.

*I rest for an infinite moment on my axe, and through the baffle on my down hood, hear his approaching footsteps... then, he passes without a word. I watch him go, feel our rhythm, and imagine his heart feels like mine. Clouds miles below catch a blistering sun; the ice is painfully radiant. We near the razor of the summit ridge; I lack absolutely nothing in my life right now; I want this moment never to end...*

It takes some time and patience to get used to the ways of the new “democratic” Nepal. Slapping the face of the hopes we had for this trip when we bought the permit four years ago, the Nepalese sold the route to three teams, one of whom was virtually impossible to communicate with. When we first arrived in basecamp there was a short debate about trying to pretend that the Koreans did not exist and that we would not use their fixed ropes, (they had already been on the mountain for two weeks), but the first foray up the glacier clarified how ridiculous this would be. They were approaching the mountain in “classic” Himalayan style, and brought enough rope to wrap the mountain up and offer it to us as a present. The route was wanded, roped and trenched to just 1000 m short of the summit, and short of by-passing their lines to prove a point about



The East Peak of Manaslu from basecamp. All photos this article: Geoff Powter.

self-reliance, we were simply obliged to change the definition of the “wilderness adventure” we were about to have. For all they had to give us, what the Koreans lacked, and what was consequently established as the Canadian contribution to the sudden mega-team, was a doctor, a set of walkie-talkies, and a decent dose of mountain smarts.

*I am here partly for some undoing. On my last trip to this beautiful country, I felt cuckolded — I came with the faith of a great love, and a mountain stole a partner and friend. I stayed angry and betrayed for years before mustering the resolve to attempt a reconciliation. Nepal accepted me back with a gentle seduction I shall never forget...*

The first third of the route on Manaslu is a great slog up the glacier to the col between Naiké Peak and Manaslu North. Historical basecamps had been placed far below the one we and the Koreans occupied, and that location would have added immeasurably to the vertical distance a team would have to cover. As it turned out, we only had to climb from 4800 to 5800 m — not an absurd

gain after the first two or three carries — but as we were soon to learn, this mountain consistently adds horizontal effort to any vertical climb; insult to injury, as it were. For a great percentage of this carry, we wove in and around an incredible field of crevasses, like drunks in an alligator pond. We would curse and swear at the endless holes, and thank the Koreans under our breath for the wands and the trail of dried shrimp snack packages which visually and nasally guided our ramblings. With the higher basecamp, we were able to bypass the historic Camp 1 site at Naiké Col and place the camp 200 m higher. Breaking this traditional placement of a camp made us somehow feel we were ahead of the game, scoring a couple of early points against the hill.

We set our camp above the Rock Band, a heap of transitional limestone which was the first technical bit of the route, and which made the Rockies look positively granitic. When we first approached this pile of cards, it was exposed rock, and we scritch our way up to the campsite. It would soon be covered with a more comforting layer of snow, but no matter how much make-up it had on it, it remained a severe grunt. We moved from the rock onto a soft, round bulge of snow above which was cleft by the track of the train of climbers, and our doctor Denis was moved to poetically name the first of many titled features: the symphysis pubis, or pubic mound. The rather appealing female imagery unfortunately did little to improve the jug...

*Rests become a little more frequent; this time to look far below, and, think of the life we left behind, on the trek. I cannot help but smile. Each day there was laughter, indescribable beauty, the joy of moving the earth beneath my feet. Each step became a mantra of quiet; quickly fading four years of doubt about this trip. The monsoon walk into this area must surely be one, of the greatest in the world, with hundreds of waterfalls, miles of enormous pine, walls of impeccable rock. We walked only occasionally in cloud, and not once did we get wet. Best of all, people of innocence still live in this Buri Gandaki valley, relatively untouched by the excess which is our fault only one valley away on the Annapurna Circuit. For an*



A path of danger, clearing the séracs to Camp 2.

*instant, thinking back into the recent past, a thought of returning home breezes through my heart like a chill wind. I catch myself; there are still months to go here. Get up, move... climb.*

We got the word from Mike: someone should sleep at Camp 1. The altitude made some decisions for us, and we imposed other decisions on ourselves. We started to show some of our

colours, with a couple of people raring to sleep high — damn the consequences! - a couple pacing themselves differently, a couple stepped on by the climb to One. Two went to stay at the camp, feeling that they might just charge on to the summit. It finally seemed, as we crawled into our sleeping bags that first night and made dinner for ourselves, that we were ready, after four years, to sink our teeth into the climb. The mountain, being as unsupportive friends had suggested, inherently evil, decided to show its own teeth and dumped three feet of snow on us in two days. Rather than waste food sitting in the tents rereading the one book, we decided to brave the storm and head to base. The Koreans appeared to be staying put as we left. We dug the ropes out, tumbled down the rock band, and terrified ourselves with the prospect of negotiating the crevasse field in completely flat light white-out. As soon as we were fully into the breach however, we looked behind us, and there, only feet away, was the Korean National Railway: nineteen people spread a metre apart, preparing to rear-end us. This they did for the entire length of the glacier, allowing Dave and I the adventurous privilege of testing all the bridges because they had no rope for glacier-travel. When we finally reached the fixed lines which led right down to basecamp, we sat down for our first rest in hours. The conga line passed us right by, and with a polite bow, even, one of the little buggers cramponned our rope and disappeared into the mist. We had a strong sense we might be dealing with a slightly

different value system here.

*We stop together at the Col to look over the final ridge, and to discuss what these last steps will mean to us. We agonize for a few moments over whether Dave understood that he was to come up and join us. He was ambivalent that morning about whether he wanted to go up on the main route to see how the Sherpas were fairing, or whether he wanted to come with us up onto the North Peak. We debate whether we should go down and find him, but decide with regrets that there probably isn't sufficient time. Peter leads off, and I could cry; he walks a tightrope line into the bluest sky I have ever seen...*

Back in basecamp, we spent a couple of days in the continuing storm, and regrouped our forces. We were forming, by the day, a stronger and stronger team, effecting an almost unbelievably good marriage of laughter and momentum. Denis, typically showing a greater amount of energy than any normal person does, took one of the storm days to head over to the basecamp of the mysterious international team, and he returned to regale us with tales of great numbers of beautiful European woman, all longing for him. We battled with him, insisting that the women would swoon instead over the rest of us, given that we smelled that much better. It was clear to us from this point on that mountains are indeed sacred and bring out the very best in us. We discovered that the Sherpas were indeed pigs too, and could reliably out-drink, out-curse, and out-macho us anyway.

WHEN the storm broke after three days, we were faced with the prospect of having to re-break the trail up to Camp One, but luckily, the Koreans were under greater time pressure, and by the time we were ready to begin breakfast, all 7000 of them had left camp and had dug a trench up to Camp One. We happily followed, and on this fourth time up to Naïke Col we had a much easier time of it, as the storm had both given rest and an itch to move. On the way up, sadly, John had the first of the migraines which would plague him through the rest of the trip, and it became clear how each of us would have very different mountains on this trip: despite spending most of his time in basecamp, Mike probably had the greatest challenge of all — he has multiple sclerosis, and just getting there was a heroic journey. The trip brought out a strength in him which kept us all moving at times, and we were thrilled when he pushed all the way to Naïke Col. Peter and Dave both had to endure the almost unbelievable task of being quiet and nice all the time, although both gave demonstrations of piggishness that they still deny. John had to suffer through his headaches and also had to deal with the shame of the world's worst mountaineering

wardrobe. Denis and I struggled to shed a cold throughout the trip, and ended up shedding most of our lungs as well.

We arrived in Camp One a great deal healthier than the previous times, and were treated to the unfolding of the Himalaya: the views were glimpses of heaven, with un-climbed giants all around, peaks poking through the clouds like the hats of hidden gods. We started a ritual which seemed to mark us as very different from the other teams on the mountain: near sunset, we would all file alone from

our tents, find a spot in the snow and watch the transformations of light on the peaks. People from the other teams were never anywhere to be seen.

*With our packs left at the North Col, the going is much easier; and we can move with joy along the ridge. As I begin to hit my stride, I think of Charlie, and I know Peter does as well — Charlie is the reason we are together on this climb; he is the bond that joins us today. I lost Charlie as a partner on an expedition; Peter lost him as a lifetime friend. Charlie's body lies high on Ama Dablam, hundreds of miles away, but he is clearly with us; perhaps his is the force that pulls me along so effortlessly now. I know if he were alive, on this trip, he would be far ahead, calling back to tell us to hurry up, that the view is magnificent up higher... I think I can hear him now...*

Our eyes were drawn up from our perch at Camp One to the real objective danger of the route. The path from One to Two involved needle-threading through 600 m of teetering

séacs, steepening dramatically at the end. As we passed through this terrain carrying the first of the loads, we gave benign names to the features around us, as if pretending that calling a debris pile "Mushroom Fields Forever" somehow mollified its risk. At the edge of the largest sérac, however, we were faced with a traverse beneath an overhanging wall of icicles which demanded more honesty from us, and we christened it "The Traverse of a Thousand Knives". We could clip in a Jumar and run the horizontal pitch, but during the long jug above to Camp Two, it was hard not to drift back to thoughts of shish-kebab. We breathed collective sighs when we finally reached the balcony which formed Camp Two, and then headed back down through it all again. From that first carry to Two, the loads got radically heavier, so that we could avoid doing any more traverses than we had to.

OUR DAYS were made immeasurably better by the beauty around us, as each step upwards seemed to expand the horizon. To the north, Tibet lay as a carpet of dry brown, endlessly bleak, but to the west, the garden of peaks in the Ganesh Himal seemed to



Dave Chase climbs to Camp 3.

change colour and form every five minutes. As we set into a daily rhythm, so did the weather. Morning would come with a wisp of low clouds, then these would slowly swell during the day to form an endless field of cotton batting by mid-afternoon. Mike would always complain on his 6 p.m. radio call that it was snowing, raining, or that the scotch had run out at basecamp, and we would radio back that we were basking in sun. Still, high above, every moment of the day, the winds would howl and dragon's claws of spindrift would rip off the summit. Korean Sherpas returning from above would tell us they were being blown off their feet attempting to set Camp four and the mountain gave us the first sign that it had special plans for us: we were stripping layer after layer off in the unbelievably calm heat as we travelled, while higher up other teams weren't allowed to walk.

*We must be a strange breed indeed, we who can find comfort on these edges. I watch as Peter dances gently away from the cornices on the right; we know only by seeing the ridge from below that the wind has folded the cornices almost fifty feet out into space. We stay slightly left, but there we feel the vertigo-pull of the chasm; on that side there is a 60-m snow cone, then a 1200 m drop to the valley. I turn and squint at the Main Summit plateau — an endless grunt that has swallowed Indra and Ang Kami all day. . .*

Denis and I opted for a first carry to Camp Three, while the others hauled loads. We endured another low-angle plod up an enormous reflecting dish, this time on a rock-hard path hidden by ground snow. If we stepped exactly in the right place, we had perfect support, but one foot to either side we plunged in to our knees. We staggered through this minefield all morning long, then reached Three and escaped. We nominated this camp for Asshole of the World — it's a bitter, wind-swept desert that gets sun for only 45 minutes of the day. Before we could descend, one of the Koreans from a higher camp stumbled by us and began to head down. It was pretty clear to us that the man was having problems — he could barely walk — but he declined our aid. He sat down several times

to giggle, and we quietly took over his care on the way down. We finally got him back to the Koreans' Camp Two, where they said Western medicine would only hurt him. Who were we to protest?

THE NEXT DAY we began to stagger rest days, and as two others went high, another Korean blundered down the fixed ropes, this time much worse off than the man before. He was incoherent, obviously edemic, yet the climbing leader voted for Korean medicine again — this time in the form of ginseng and powdered

cow's horn. An hour later he came back asking for Denis, and we quickly sent the man down to Camp One, where John spent the night pumping up the Gamow bag. The next day, John was exhausted and the Korean headed down to basecamp, having come a little too close.

My and Denis's chance at disaster came the next day, when we had an argument with a propane stove canister. The stem cracked while it was being threaded and gas leaked inside the tent, staying in the hollow where the camp lay for hours. I felt my lungs searing with pain, and spent the next twenty

minutes with dry, heaving coughs. The next day it was a given; it took me one hour to climb 12 m towards Camp Three, so I headed down to base, thinking the trip might be over. Denis had also suffered the night before with the gas, but as always, his motivation was remarkable, and he continued with his eyes firmly on the summit. His health really wasn't up to it, and he kept on being confronted with medical situations. Very unfairly, his first night sleeping at Camp Three with Dave and the Sherps was spent rescuing two members of the international team who failed to make their own camp, and resuscitating a Korean who was asphyxiating in one of their appallingly ventilated tents. Because we were moving so well, we had created a new plan in which we would summit all the way from Camp Three. This plan did not take into account the poor team health and exhaustion, however, and the group of Denis, Dave and the two Sherpas made a noble but doomed attempt two days later. Denis valiantly made



Looking west from Camp 2, to Shishipangma.



The unclimbed East Face of Larkya Peak.



what was essentially a solo attempt after the others dropped out, and made it all the way to the Summit Plateau before racking, bloody coughs brought him down. He later diagnosed himself as having pneumonia, and his further participation in the trip was sadly ruled out. The team retreated to base en masse, more than a little sick of this rock.

*I'm walking an inner edge now, quickly moving from exhilaration to dismay as we near the summit. I really want to be able to keep going, because anything in my life from this moment on might seem downhill. I've watched so many of my friends get so complicated after these climbs, with sadness and emptiness suddenly a part of their lives because it seems nothing will ever match the summit. I have to promise myself that I won't let this happen. I move; Peter is waiting...*

Back in base again, the climb was taking on a bit of a pallor. If we'd had another month, we might have been able to rest, get back the drive, but we were feeling the pressure of time. The Koreans felt it even more so, and they launched what was clearly their last attempt; incredibly, they picked the same man we Gamow'ed to be their summiteer. He left after explaining that he would summit or die. We rethought our pallor — it was definitely not that bleak. Two days later, around noon, the Korean and his Sherpa radioed from above their Camp Four that they were moving too slow, and that they probably couldn't continue to the top. Only six hours later, they radioed again and said that they had reached the summit. The entire basecamp celebrated; there was a renewed sense of the

possible in our team as well, although again it was reasonably guarded. The Koreans packed up hastily the following day, and incredibly, left only one man behind to meet the summit party; I can only imagine their feelings when they topped the ridge above basecamp and saw no tents. They came down late the next day, and it was obvious they were having trouble — they could hardly walk. Denis played doctor again, and pulling their boots, we saw horrendously black feet -they had spent the night out only 300 m below the top, and they would pay for it with their feet. We packed up the Korean and his Sherpa on a porter and sent them down to a helicopter in the valley. The next day, we got word that the very strong leaders of the international team had followed our plan and summited all the way from the North Col in a short day. There are clearly degrees of success in the Himalaya.

The next day, Dave, Indra and Ang Kami left for the main summit. Mike felt they may be the strongest chance for this, our own last push as time ran out. Peter and I left the day after, to act as back up for the main bid, and to attempt the South Ridge of the North Peak. When we arrived at Camp Two however, (in our renewed fitness now just a half-day jog), we found Dave in his tent. The heat of the day was simply incredible, and he left the Sherpas to go up on their own; a strange turn of events having the Sherpas go on alone, but in many ways it seemed a fitting tribute to the kind of team we had become; they were as much a part of this climb as we were, and didn't seem our employees at all. The next day then, Dave, Peter and I went to Three and the Sherpas



Naiké Peak and Pang Phu-chi.

established Four. We spent the night talking about ski trips at home and Thai beaches, and did the slow, high-altitude prep the next morning. The Sherpas left their camp early in the morning, and we didn't hear from them until we made the radio call from the North Col later that day.

*We arrive. We're precariously perched on the edge of the sky, still a few feet short of the true summit because we daren't sit on the cornice. I begin to argue with myself that this is some kind of failure because I'm not on the main peak, but quickly dismiss the thought: this is much higher than I've ever been; I have my toes; I'm with the best person I could hope to be with; this is the finest day of climbing I've ever had. Peter stands to go, I take a few steps, then sit down to think again...*

We summited on the North Peak, then stopped at the North Col to radio. The Sherpas had not made it, and we were saddened: this would have been a glorious two-pronged day. When they come down, they were exhausted, and it took a few days to really put together the pieces, of their attempt and discover we really didn't have anything to be disappointed about at all. They came within 30 m of the top before they were stopped by the huge 'schrund which protects the final pyramid. With the late hour and a rising wind, they judiciously decided to call it quits, though this decision was to later cause them much agony. Thirty metres.

We collectively descended to discover that everything was ready for leaving. Mike had arranged a phenomenal clean-up of basecamp — the first it had seen in forty-odd years. We paid for all this work ourselves because we had a strong sense the \$6000 environmental fee we paid in Kathmandu wouldn't ever leave the Environment Minister's pocket.

IN LESS THAN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS, we started to head down to the world again — just as the big storm began to hit. Our descent into the clouds, through fresh snow, down into the land of smells and sound, was a powerful one, like a heavy sedation taking effect. We talked little, especially about the mountain, and simply concentrated on the sights and especially the food waiting in Kathmandu. Our walk out completing a circumnavigation of the mountain was as magical and amnesiac as the walk-in, and Manaslu was soon exiled to the land of memories. Sensing the future for us, I think, we began to drift apart on the walk, especially when we finally collided with the explosion of the Annapurna Circuit trail. There, we found people from the other world, and we drifted into talk of political referendum, of war, of money. The dream of the walk was shattered even more in Kathmandu, partly by that reality, but more so by the news that the day we left the mountain, two members of the international team were killed in separate accidents above Camp Three. They were our friends.

# Touching On The Mamquam

Peter Fehr

Out of breath with the light now fading  
Running fast to try to capture a scene difficult to record.

Forty kilometres of ground-pounding to not succeed at climbing Pyramid Peak.

Yet we are not disappointed.

For each moment here and along the approach has been wondrous

If not mystical.

With the attempt on the mountain behind us

The climax seems to have culminated here

For us to enjoy.

The true mountain experience

Oneness with this precious blue Jewel called Earth.

Wondering if this film could ever grasp this feeling

I figure that one fifty-thousandth of the moment would be a chance

Well worth taking.

Mount Skypilot's jagged outline a contrast

On the soft orange and pink sky

Revives memories of a similar night camped high upon its rocky south ridge.

The circumstances of atmospheric conditions, light and elevation

Holds us speechless in a spectacle of geological fascination.

High upon this unvisited knoll

Worth the trouble of swiftly attaining.

The mechanical click of the shutter flies with purpose

Sending a flash in diminishing light.

Illuminating an array of colours unseen with the evening falling on us.

In a place so diversified that volcanoes and ice

Destruction and rebirth all coincide.

Deserts of ash and lava of every tint imaginable

Can be imprinted on the mind.

Like an image on the film can be recollected, remembered or revealed as evidence.

That this earth sustains many an oasis out of reach of the tempered steel that awaits approval

Of yet another logging road.

Providence has it that we surround these practically untouchable heights with park boundaries

While the great rivers, lakes and forests lay in ruins.

Once a proud and bountiful land of

Bears and Eagles Whales and Salmon

Now reduced to pulp barges and dioxins

Leveled areas of Cedar and Spruce

Forests visible from space.

As the topsoils wash out to sea

Leaving an altered, if not spoiled, wasteland.

The haze produced by the distant pulp mills for now hides the



John Clarke

tortured scene below

As the sun finally sinks below yet another great rising oasis.

Protected by its vast impregnable glaciers and serrated precipitous grey cliffs.

Its natural authority of existence stands clear and represented in its colossal blooming of its habitat.

Much time has passed since the last great ice-sheets reluctantly withdrew their tremendous mass.

Yet still we see the last reaches inching a retreat up these highest massifs.

Glaciers groaning, cracking

Protesting their seemingly inevitable extinction.

Garibaldi a place of so many transformations

A metamorphosis of always changing terrain.

An extravaganza of colour and texture

A sanctuary for the wild.

Truly this area protected by its invisible boundaries

Is no place of insignificance.

Watching the last shimmering ridges of distant peaks fading to black

Honya smiles saying

"All mountaineering objectives, whether or not the route is completed

Instill a great teaching and a new experience." Cool breezes and clear skies have brought a chilly but intense star-filled evening.

An Owl hoots nearby as we quietly

Within our own thoughts

Return to camp.



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## *A Guided Fantasy*

### **A Client's View Of The North Face Of Mount Temple**

*Gerry Kent*

*I SIT ON THE SUMMIT, and the real world becomes the dream. I've had this dream since I was a child, when there was darkness and someone to fear. Then, when I heard approaching footsteps, I would close my eyes and come here, to a windswept ridge above castles of ice and a lightening sky, and I would be home.*

I FIRST MET BARRY BLANCHARD while I was taking a "Complete Ice" course with the Yamnuska Mountain School in March, 1988. It was a busy time for him as he was in the midst of organizing the "Everest Light" expedition; however, he was able to find enough time to be our instructor as well as our cook. We came to admire his abilities in both areas. Oddly, one incident during that course has stuck in my mind more than any other: the sight of Barry eating cold bean burritos for breakfast. It showed that he was ready for any challenge.

Since then, Barry has guided me on climbs on several occasions, and what started as a guide-client relationship has developed into a friendship. I don't know who suggested the North Face of Mount Temple, but I suppose I started the tale by asking Barry if he would guide me on a challenging "mixed" climb, involving rock, snow and ice pitches. Barry knew I had soloed Mount Robson in 1987, so he must have concluded that I could handle a certain degree of terror. The North Face of Temple would be a good test as to how much I could handle.

The Greenwood/Locke route, which Barry chose, is a classic climb. When it was first done in 1966, it was probably as difficult as any alpine route done in Europe and North America and was an outstanding achievement. However, for a leading alpinist today, the only challenge it would offer would be to set a speed record, to solo the route, or to guide an ascent. For Barry, it was going

to be the latter. It would likely be the most difficult route guided in the Rockies thus far. The drive from my home in Cranbrook to Lake Louise took me through Kootenay National Park, where, for about 90 kilometres, almost nothing is seen apart from trees, rivers, meadows and mountain peaks; an area virtually untouched by logging, mining or other development. There are only two small resorts along the way, each of which has a restaurant and offers accommodation in cabins. One of them has a gas station, the only one in the Park. There are also some picnic areas, warden cabins, parking lots for hiking trails and stops of interest, but it is the peacefulness and the serenity of the area that is most noticeable.

About 15 km into the Park, I came upon a line of cars parked on the side of the highway. I drove past them slowly, thinking that they had stopped to look at some wildlife, which is quite abundant in the Park, but, as I rounded a corner, I realized that they had stopped because of a serious car accident. Two dead bodies lay in the meadows, a somber group of people around each. Several Parks Canada and police vehicles blocked the roadway, their lights flashing silently. A helicopter rested motionless on the pavement. The facial expressions spoke of tragedy. A man returned to the car in front of me, carrying a sleeping bag which he had taken to help one of the victims. He was crying, and as he steadied himself by leaning on the back of his car, his wife put her arm around him to comfort him.

The air was heavy with mourning, and I was overwhelmed with sadness. Was this a warning? Should I turn back? The urge to do so was almost irresistible, but the momentum of my plans spurred me on, though most of my enthusiasm was gone. Being a spectator at this tragedy meant that I no longer could ignore the possible deadly consequences of risk taking. Were the benefits from the climb worth taking the risks involved? It was a question that would haunt me throughout the climb.

I had arranged to meet Barry at the shopping centre in Lake Louise in the late afternoon of August 12, 1990. To the south of Lake Louise, only a short distance away, the massive North Face of Mount Temple dominates the horizon. That evening we planned to hike about four kilometers to Lake Annette, a small lake at the base of the face, and to bivouac near its shore under a rock overhang.

IT WAS 2:30 A.M. A scratching sound woke me up. I rolled over to face the blank wall at the back of our bivouac. My white baseball hat seemed to be propelling itself along the wall. This was not an ordinary baseball hat. It had a "World Series of Curling" logo on the front. A packrat had obviously not seen one of these before and was defying gravity to snatch this unique prize. He had even hid himself under the hat, which meant that when I grabbed the hat, I almost got more than my hat back. With a squeal, the rat broke away from my grasp and was not seen again.

We left our sheltered bivouac at about 4:30 a.m. There was the inevitable slog up a moderately-angled scree slope which led us to the beginning of a long snow gully. The snow was in good shape—it was hard enough that crampons worked well and gave a feeling of security, even though a fall on this 40° slope might have been disastrous. We climbed unroped, which made sense to me, since one of us would have had difficulty holding the other's fall anyway. Normally, a guide would short-rope his client on ground like this, but I had told Barry that I felt insulted when I was short-rope on pitches that were easier than what I have soloed.

Nevertheless, Barry did short-rope me after we were above the snow gully on some easy rock, since we had kept our crampons

on expecting to face some ice climbing higher up. As we neared the right edge of the "Dolphin" (a large icefield in the centre of the face), we heard the hum and whirr of rocks as they plummeted down the Dolphin. All Barry said was, "It's started." It had been a warm night and the snow and ice on the scree ledges were melting, causing rocks to break free. We took off our crampons and set up our first belay in a sheltered area as rocks shot by periodically.

This was like combat — we were about to go over the top. Hopefully, the demons tossing these rocks had lousy aims; this would be their best chance, since the next belay point would be out of range of the worst rockfall. Barry led off and was soon out of sight. I could hear rocks ricocheting in the area where he was climbing. He climbed quickly and was soon calling for me to follow. As it turned out, this was not going to be like some ill-fated charge at Gallipoli. There was only a minor casualty:

Barry's cheek was grazed by a falling rock. When he showed it to me, he looked quite offended that this should have happened to him. This is the only time I've seen Barry even close to being flustered — was this another warning? The seriousness of this climb was starting to register.

Several pitches of moderate climbing on crumbly rock led us to a small icefield. We stopped on a flat rock ridge to put on our crampons and have lunch. It was precisely noon, and as any experienced client will tell you, at this time a guide will go no farther until the lunch break is over.

It became apparent that I had made a terrible mistake: I had agreed that Barry could buy the food for this trip (it was his turn), which meant that I was offered (no, not cold bean burritos — worse yet) some crumbly biscuits and dry sausage which had the feel and taste of compacted sawdust. There was also some cheese which was so exotic it was canned, and had a taste I have completely blocked out of my mind. This must have been revenge for the Sugar Frosted Flakes I had brought along for breakfast on our last trip. (In spite of his protests and scorn, Barry had had two bowls.)

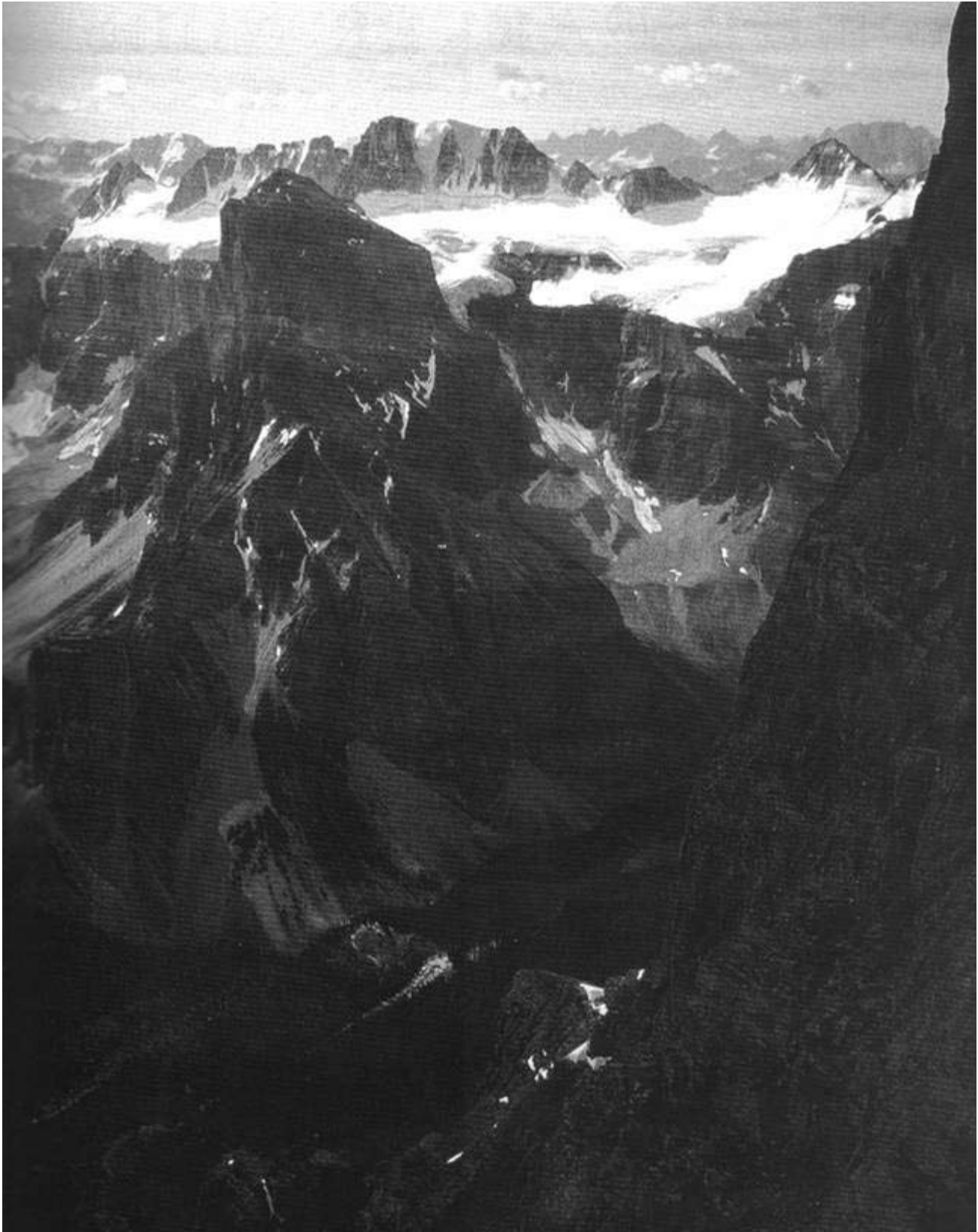
THERE WERE SOME concessions to my junk food addiction: two chocolate bars and a Magic Pantry chicken dinner. However, even these items could not awaken the appetite which had deserted me from the time I got a close-up look at the Face.

We simul-climbed the three pitches on the ice face, at the top of which the real difficulties of the face began. We huddled under an overhang and put on our rock-shoes, which would be the only footwear we would need for the rest of the way. The exposure was impressive; an unprotected fall here would mean plummeting about 900 m to the scree slope far below, probably arriving in several pieces. The packrat was probably waiting expectantly down there, and maybe it was his relatives throwing rocks at us from up above.

Apart from a couple of aid moves, first pitch above the overhang wasn't too difficult, even with a 15-kg pack on my back. Since Barry was leading, he decided we would haul his pack, which was even heavier, and which he had affectionately named "The Pig." I accused him of earning diesel winch, in case he had to haul me up the harder pitches.

As I neared Barry's belay point, he could observe the look of terror in my eyes. To encourage me, he said:

"You look like an alpinist." "But I don't feel like an alpinist." "Doesn't matter; every alpinist knows these feelings of dread and impending doom."



HERE WAS AN OUTER and an inner challenge, both having to do with keeping one's balance. This was a dark, forbidding place, and it was starting to have an impact on my emotions. Going up was frightening — harder than anything I had ever done, but going down was going to be even more terrifying. There could be no illusion of security up here. Perhaps that is why I need to be in these places, to remind myself that I am not the master of my life, nor can I be. Part of me was in shock, and the desire to survive

was clamouring for attention. This was a strong reminder of how valuable and precious life is, and that we should be grateful for each moment.

Barry's pack got stuck as we hauled it up, and he wanted to lower me down to free it. Now I had to trust the rope and Barry's skill, and it was not comforting when Barry mentioned that the scene was like something from "The Eiger Sanction." I decided to trust him anyway. Down I went, trying to concentrate on

something other than the consequences of something going wrong. We succeeded in hauling the pack the rest of the way up the pitch, but it was obvious that this system was not going to work.

So, Barry developed a system that guaranteed he would be exhausted by the end of the climb. For the next several pitches (with a bivouac in between), Barry led without a pack, set up a bomb-proof anchor, rappelled down to where I had belayed him, picked up "The Pig," jumared back up the rope, and then belayed me from the anchor. This whole process took about two hours, more than enough time to contemplate the unrelenting exposure and the whirr and hum of the deadly rockfall in the vicinity. I told Barry I didn't know who was crazier — me for paying for something like this, or him for doing this for pay; but, as Barry has said, it's a delightful form of madness.

By the time we reached our bivouac site, three pitches above the icefield, I developed an intensity of thought that did not allow much room for conversation, apart from my questions: "How does it look up above?" or "How many more pitches now?"

After dinner, Barry tried to start a conversation:

"I wonder how your wife is doing right now at home with your five kids."

"I don't know."

End of conversation. There was also no room for any thoughts of my law practice. In fact, this was perhaps the only 48-hour period in 10 years when I never once thought about my practice.

During my long waits at each belay station, when I wasn't contemplating the exposure, my attention was drawn to a rock sentinel that protruded from a ridge about 500 m away. It had a human appearance. There was an aura of loneliness about it, as if condemned to stand guard over this place of darkness, rigid and unmoving, a prisoner of its determination and stubbornness, a "hardman."

There were also other images: Barry, without any hint of resentment, stuffing every heavy object in his pack, so that I would have a chance to climb the more difficult rock pitches on the second day. It meant that the jumaring would be agonizing, but he did not complain. The sacrifice he made here was similar to, but not as great as the sacrifice he made on the Canadian Everest expedition in 1986, when he stepped aside to allow Sharon Wood to be in the lead summit pair, giving her the opportunity to be the first North American woman to climb Everest. Perhaps this is how Barry will be remembered, more for his sacrifices than for his summits.

After the bivouac, the rock pitches got steadily harder. We were passed by a pair of climbers from Canmore who started that day. It was slow going with the system we were using. To avoid another bivouac, we decided that I would jumare the last upward pitch. I fought back the feeling of terror and puffed my way up. By this time, my hand would hardly grip my ice axe, as I bashed away at the pitons to remove them. Sometimes my hand became numb and I had no choice but to wait a minute or two for the feeling to return. Barry felt that the jumaring finally got me into the climb. The exertion certainly helped to relieve the tension, although it was a little late to start enjoying myself.

The difficulty of the rock pitches had gradually increased from 5.2/5.3 on loose, crumbly rock above the snow gully, to this last upward pitch at 5.9. Although I didn't climb it, I knew it was hard, since Barry took a lot of time on it and he used all his pitons by the time he got to the top of it. Even the speedy Canmore climbers were quite slow on this pitch.

After a relatively easy one-pitch traverse, I stepped out onto the

massive and easy-angled scree slope on the west side of Mount Temple. It took a few moments for the feeling of relief to flood over me, but soon Barry and I were grinning at each other, grateful, probably for different reasons, that our 40-hour ordeal was over.

We were able to reach the "tourist route" before dark, which, with the aid of headlamps, we followed down to the trail which leads back to the Moraine Lake parking lot where I had left my car. On this trail, there is a large bench at the top of a series of switchbacks, about 3 km from the parking lot. Barry and I sat on this bench, looking at the stars glowing in the moonless sky, finding it hard to summon up the energy to carry on. I said to Barry:

"This would be quite the place to die. Just imagine, we're discovered tomorrow, lying dead on the bench. I can see the headline now: 'Climbers die on park bench.'"

This bad humour was the only thing we needed to finish the hike out without another rest.

Barry has been pushing the limits in two areas: by doing extreme alpine routes in Canada, and by guiding routes not normally guided. Like Conrad Kain before him, he is not willing to stay within the conservative bounds of what is generally guided. He has shown that harder routes can be guided safely. He is demonstrating that good judgment is what leads to safe mountaineering, not slavish adherence to accepted rules and philosophy.

For me, climbing is worthwhile because of the spiritual renewal which I experience. I find I am better able to love God and others, having faced the challenges and risks associated with a climb. There is a delicate balance and it is easy to weight the scale with too much risk, but I am more afraid of what would happen if I was to avoid the risks altogether. Physical deterioration and death are inevitable. Most people live as if the same were true for their spirits, but I believe that is not the case. Perhaps that is why it is important to look beyond the accepted lifestyle in our society; treasure is usually found where few are looking.

# *The Darker Side - Reflections On Risk*

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Vowell Pinnacle, Bugaboos. Photo: Baiba Morrow.

## *Cold Blood*

THE MORNING WAS COOL, a little below zero degrees Celsius, but the last tattered clouds of yesterday's cold front disappeared as we approached the parking lot at Yamnuska. It was shaping to be a surprisingly warm December day. We had finally managed to squeeze out a play day from our rather congested work and family schedules. It seemed that the past year had allowed us little time to spend with each other recreating. Grant's new job and my newborn boy managed to consume any time we might otherwise have spent at large. We were all too ready to enjoy this day of activity. Given the favorable conditions, we decided at the last minute to do a climb on Yam and we set off early, neglecting

*Jeff Wilson & Grant Wildi*

at the same time to inform anyone what we would be doing. This would be my first extended climb, though I had been climbing shorter routes for years. Grant had climbed seven routes on Yam without incident. We decided on Grillmair's Chimney as a good introductory route; one that would leave us plenty of time to descend before dark or closely thereafter.

We hiked to the base of the climb, noting that the temperature was warming sufficiently to start the day wearing only a few light layers. We carried packs containing gear and food for an unpleasant yet safe night out if conditions changed. After a moment to arrange gear, we began. The approach pitch was an easy scramble although



the rotten limestone required careful footing. Grant suggested it would be a good acclimatization to this quality of rock, as we would be seeing plenty of it throughout the climb. At the first roped pitch, Grant took the lead for most of the climb.

Grant: The climbing seemed pretty straightforward I remember it took a few moves to get used to rack, but it didn't prove too much of a hindrance except in the tighter cracks.

Jeff: The seconding was smooth with a few interesting moves. Despite a slight northwest breeze, the sun-exposed face was warm, only the fingers feeling the cold. The second pitch proved to be a bit of a squeeze with the packs, but with no major difficulties. On the third pitch, a little routefinding trouble resulted in a rather long belay. We had both cooled down and so put on additional clothing — Grant a parka and me a pile jacket.

Grant: The belay I had set up was not bombproof and I knew it. Two large chocks wedged in a rather suspect face was not what I'd have preferred. However, the climbing had not been overly difficult and promised to become easy on the next pitch. At the time, it did not seem to be a momentous lapse of judgment.

Jeff: Grant was starting the fourth pitch by traversing just above me. His feet were level with my eyes, when I saw them start to slide. It registered as very weird that Grant should be slipping on such an easy piece. I relaxed and waited.

Grant: The belay was poor, but I had been lulled into an unjustified sense of security by the grade of the climb. I began up a short ramp of broken and irregular rock. It would be about ten feet of careful but straightforward climbing into a winding, low angle chimney. Unexpectedly, the large slab I committed my weight to released. I fell backwards, cradling the rock.

FROM THIS POINT ON, my memories are brief and sharp, and they have stayed with me in the present, as though they continue to happen. I am free falling, expecting to be stopped. I then realize that either the rope has broken, or we are both falling. I know I am going to hit the steeply sloping rocks below and I relax to absorb the impact. I am tumbling completely out of control. And then I stop. Disoriented, I have no idea where Jeff is. I quickly assess my condition and appear to be entirely intact — miraculous.

Jeff: I was waiting for the pull of the fall. Slow motion began here — the sliding of shoes, a distinct pull, and the taut ping ping of the protection. There is such clarity of thought. I am falling, floating face first down the wall. I see Grant tumbling off to my left. There is nothing to stop us now. My helmet taps something. My knee scrapes. This is how it happens; we're going to die. I see Jill and our son in the sky looking down on my body at the base of Yam. A surge of understanding and a need to stop grab me. The ramp I am on ends at the horizon of a sheer drop. I feel the air time. I feel the impact below. Spread-eagled, I descend.

Grant: Somehow, I am stuck sideways like a cam in the gully we fell through. I hear Jeff call. He is just below me, upside down with his left leg jammed in a crack and his head resting two feet from a steep drop. Blood is splashed on the rocks between us. He is in obvious and severe pain. "Fuck, my leg. Get me up. Get me up." My immediate feeling is one of dread. I feel one or both of us may die, and that Jeff may be dying of injuries at this moment. His face

is covered in blood and an arm and leg are giving him tremendous pain, but his voice is strong. I start to set up an anchor to belay him into a more comfortable position. I must take my time and do everything right. I look around and find a perfect crack above me for a Friend. I stand up and collapse. My ankle is broken. It seems like a minor impediment but climbing or walking are not possible. I place the protection and determine which of the maze of ropes around me goes to Jeff's harness. I clip him into the protection and kick his foot loose from where it is caught.

Jeff: I am hanging upside down. I'm hurt bad. Strings of blood are dripping from my mouth. I feel like I'm choking on my own blood. I hear Grant call my name. My left arm is broken. Both of my legs feel broken. I just want to be right side up. I want to drop my pack, to free the weight. I work the pack off and watch it as it hits and disappears off of the edge, oblivious to the meaning of throwing away the gear. I feel hurried, panicked. I yell to Grant. I hear him say "These things take time. We have to do it right." Grant keeps asking which rope leads to my harness. Finally I feel my foot being lifted. Balancing a little with my right arm I swing into a sitting position.



Grant: My mind is racing. I am dealing well with immediate necessities, but I am having trouble focusing on the pros and cons of evacuation plans. I move down to Jeff. He is more comfortable now. He decides only his arm is broken, but he is badly bruised and lacerated. The whole scenario makes me feel more panicked as it progresses. Jeff is able to find shelter by squirming into a large, slanted crack in the gully. I give him my parka and some juice left in my pack. My only choice seems to be to rappel and get help as quickly as possible. I don't think Jeff's chances are good for an exposed night on the mountain and there is still time for a helicopter rescue. I gather together the remaining equipment and cut the rope left from Jeff's anchor.

Throughout this time, he keeps asking if he's anchored. Either he needs the reassurance or he keeps forgetting the answer. I have to get moving. I explain one more time what I'm doing and where I'm going, and I start the rappel.

MY SUPPLY OF PROTECTION IS LIMITED. With my broken ankle, I must rappel straight down; I am unable to scramble, especially unbelayed. I don't know how many raps I'll have to do or what kind of protection I'll need for each anchor. I go with the minimum I need to just feel safe and I hope that will be enough to reach the bottom. As the rappels continue I remember that I did not do a body survey on Jeff to determine the full extent of his injuries. I am dumbfounded that after years of first aid training and simulations I would forget such a basic step. I had depended entirely on Jeff's own assessment. I didn't know if the break was compound, whether massive bleeding existed, or if there was anything further I could have done to comfort him. I am sick with myself. I think of Jeff's family and new baby boy. I am flooded with determination to see him rescued and at the same time despair at his chances.

The rappels I am doing are tenuous. Whether or not I reach the base is uncertain. I know I can fall, the rope can break, or another anchor can pull. My mind seems to eliminate any hesitancy. I see

no other options but a quick descent. One long rappel remains. When the protection runs out, I must loop my gear sling around a suspect gendarme for the final rappel and hope that the rope is long enough to get me to the bottom.

Jeff: Grant is gone. I use the hood of the parka to apply pressure to the bleeding from my eye, mouth and chin. The pain is almost completely numbed. I figure it will take Grant an hour to rappel and a bit more to get out for help, and certainly the helicopter will be here before dark. I am resting. The sun is warm and the parka covers my legs. As I run my tongue across the broken teeth, I feel a definite movement. My jaw is broken in the centre of the mandible. I slowly move my left arm and feel the break. I am in the back of an inclined crack, each heel braced on a little nubbin of rock to keep me from slipping onto my leg loops. The day is passing on as I slip in and out of rest.

JUST BEFORE DARK, I hear Grant's dog bark, loud and close. We had left him at the parking lot. Grant must have fallen — he should have been out long ago. I need to do something. There will be a moon tonight. If no one comes by the time the moon is up, I will have to downclimb. I see myself being found dead, belayed into a crack. I feel myself slipping and falling during the downclimb. I decide that I will attempt something when the time demands. The night breezes bring light shivers. My legs are cool and my feet are cold. I know I must put the parka on to protect my core. I can't get the parka over my left arm, so I put my right arm in and struggle the parka around my back and pin it between my left arm and the wall. The warmth I trap is immediate. I know I can last the night now. I remember a caramel in my jacket. After fifteen minutes or more it is in my mouth. I breathe into the hood pinned against the wall by my helmet. Every little thing warms my body, holds my hope.

Grant: I finish the descent and realize a great chore still remains. The car is at best a long walk downhill and walking on my ankle is out of the question. I begin to slide down the hill on my bum. For two hours I am sliding down the scree, through the juniper, through the trees, rolling sideways in the long stretches. At the quarry, I stand and hobble down the road. Progress is agonizingly slow. I try to grit my teeth and run, but one step lands me on my bum. I laugh and cry at such a pointless attempt and think of the movies. How much harder those men must have been. I finally reach the truck. My dog barks when he sees me. I am close to help. I drive to the Shell station in Exshaw and initiate the rescue.

Jeff: My feet are getting colder. It takes a lot of pounding to get even the vaguest tingle back into them. The leg loops chafe the inside of my thighs. I know my circulation is compromised, but one foot must hold me in the crack in order to pound the other foot. I would slide out of the crack and onto the protection if I didn't prop myself back. I think of Jill and Jeremy and have a word with Jesus. I must fight. I begin yelling for help at intervals. It calms me, allows me to think clearly. I hear voices. I sounds like Grant. No, it can't be. For hours, every train that made the grade in the valley sounded like a helicopter coming around the corner. Then I am sure. "Stay where you are." I've made it.

Grant: It is taking forever to get in touch with Kananaskis rescue.

The operator doesn't know the number. Friends in Canmore aren't home. Finally I get through to the rescue coordinator, Tim Auger, in Banff, just as a Kananaskis ranger pulls into the service station. The professionals take over.

Throughout the entire rescue operation, everyone involved is so incredibly skilled and attentive that my sense of relief and my confidence in their ability give me great hope for Jeff's safe return.

Jeff: I know they'll soon be here. I hear radios, voices. "We're bringing a sleeping bag and hot drink." My mind and body focus on that thought for the next six hours. I am so cold that every time I move my mouth from the hood of the parka to answer a question about where I am located, I go into extended, violent shivering. My feet are stumps that I keep pounding, one after the other. I think they are frosted. My injuries are numb save for the minor scrapes where the leg loops cut every time I pound my feet. I am impatient and whine, "Please hurry." My mind wanted me to cut the crap, but in the final hour, I did it anyway.

Mike O'Reilly climbed in the crack and started setting the protection which would bring me down. Just having someone there relaxed my mind and seemed to warm the crack. Jock Richardson stemmed in and checked me over, splinting my arm, giving a shot of Demerol via a paramedic on the rescue squad, and preparing my harness and attachments for the lower. I stood up and was not able to balance with my legs. I am put in a Gramminger seat on Jocko and, with two people on the ropes, begin the descent. I try to straighten my body, try to help, but end up a flopping 80-kilo weight pulling on Jocko for a long and tenuous lower. I am in

Demerol land. There is no question, until later, that I am saved from the start of the rescue. Problems during the lower never enter my head. The calmness and attention to detail by the rescue crew, from the extensive protection to the handling, release me from worry. A three hour wheel stretcher lower to a waiting ambulance becomes an ordeal for the rescue crew and a safe, comfortable ride for myself.

Aftermath: There is one more significant story to tell. The members of the rescue crew put themselves on the line every time they respond to an accident. The intensity of their ordeal this night, trying to balance speed with safety in a twelve hour night rescue off-route, is worthy of respect. The emotions of their story are equal to those of ours.

The following people were involved in the rescue: Jay Anderson, Tim Auger, Alex Baradoy, John Benson, Steve Donelon, Gerald Edwards, Gerry Fox, Lloyd Gallagher, Dave Hanna, Jay Honeyman, Rick Huseby, Rod Jaeger, Randy Kennedy, Ben Miles, Mike O'Reilly, Dick Preston, Jock Richardson, Bob Romanyshyn, Pat Ronald, Toby Sprado and Paul Vidalin.

The initial report came in at 1640 hours, approximately three hours after the accident had occurred, and the rescue was completed at 0550 the following morning. The entire operation was performed in cloud-covered darkness. Anchors were difficult to locate given the off-route nature of the fall and the difficulty in ascertaining where Jeff was on the top third of the face.

Such brief description does little service to the difficulty involved, and we offer our deepest thanks to the efforts and professional quality of the rescue team.



There's no doubt about the increasing popularity of our sport. There have been new indoor walls built, new crags opened, and an incredible increase in the number of people at the cliffs. We are seeing what is surely the greatest single change in climbing as it becomes dramatically more accessible. At the heart of this change is the growth of sport climbing, with its simplicity, gymnastic beauty and apparent safety. The first two characteristics will go unchallenged; it's the latter I question. At Val David, a popular crag north of Montreal, 1992 has seen a summer full of serious accidents, most of which were preventable. Here's a list I've collected just from stories at work; I imagine it's not complete:

In May, a climber fell 20 m at Mount Cesaire with his last protection at 10 m. He died.

In June, a climber fell 10 m and hit the ground. His knot came undone and he broke his arm and ankle, and suffered multiple bruises. Then, while top-roping, another climber finished his climb and leaned out to be lowered, but his friend instead took him off belay. He died.

In July, another top-roping incident: a climber fell 20 m because the anchor sling came untied. He suffered a broken arm and clavicle, and his helmet was shattered. Also that month, someone clipped the descender into just a single strand of the rope while rappelling and fell 20 m to the ground, breaking mandible and spine.

During August, a leader fell and hit the ground after placing his first piece of protection (a chock) because the cable broke. Broken leg. Another leader fell before getting in any protection and broke his feet.

I recently received an interesting article from the American Mountain Guides Association about the climbing accidents in Yosemite National Park. It summarized the accidents of the past 21 years and revealed some very interesting patterns that are repeating in Canada and show up in these examples from our local cliff. It's very possible that other areas are experiencing similar situations and some conclusions and recommendations might be useful:

1. It's wonderful that our sport is taking off and that more and more people are benefiting from the value of climbing, however, many of these new folks are not taking formal instruction, but are learning from friends who might have taken a real course. It's definitely an inexpensive way to learn, but is certainly NOT the safest.

2. Over 90% of the accidents and 80% of the fatalities were

### *A Cautionary Tale*

Our planned party for a week-long ski trip into the Caribou Range in B.C. (west of Mount Robson Provincial Park) had originally been six, but by mid-April it had dwindled to two — Paul Clements and myself. We flew into the Gilmour Glacier from Valemount by helicopter, climbed a couple of peaks, endured 24 hours of very high winds and snow, and then moved west to climb Mount Sir Wilfred Laurier, the highest peak in the range.

easily preventable, as the cause was human error. In case after case the cause was one of these:

**Ignorance:** There's always more to learn and climbers are generally the stubborn sort. Several partners have said of a dead friend, "I tried to give him advice but he never took it well and got pissed off." Don't stop learning and keep an open mind. Keep reading, taking courses, practicing, and accepting advice from others.

**Casualness:** Do you still say "on belay, climbing, and climb away" before every route? I doubt it. When was the last time you wore a helmet? Do you even own one? What other basics have you dropped from your beginner days? This is still an unforgiving sport, even though modern equipment and indoor walls have helped a bit. There should be a "what if" philosophy burned into your routine. Complacency can kill. A checking routine of yourself and your partner should also be automatic.

**Distraction:** I find that I get distracted more easily all the time. There always seems to be a beautiful woman in lycra tights, or a nearby climber yelling, or sore feet from those ever-so-tight slippers that promise to get me up the elusive 5.12. It may even be Alzheimer's from my old age, but it's real, and it's causing accidents, and I'm not the only one suffering.

3. The belayer could have prevented at least one of these accidents and there must be more time during instruction on the art of belaying. Most people I interviewed could not tell me the difference between a direct and an indirect belay, nor could they point out the most critical moment during the climb. With the appearance of the walls and the trend in sport climbing, there has to be more time spent on teaching to belay.

4. It has become far easier to start leading with the bolted routes that have appeared and as a result, many folks have led several routes, and hard ones at that, in their first season. The skills and understanding necessary to progress

into lead climbing are not always taught. We've got to slow it all down.

The increased rate of change that is strongly affecting many areas of our world is also upon the sport of rock climbing. We haven't evolved so much so fast in any previous time in history. Most of this progress is good for the sport, but there is always a cost. Some costs we learn to live with, like bolts and chalk and crowds; but I hope that more accidents is not one of them.



### *Maurice De St. Jorre*

Our intention was to put a camp in at about 2745 m on the upper Tête Glacier and then climb our objective the following day. We were skiing up the east side of the Tête at about 2440 m, having gained elevation on a lateral moraine. The glacier in this area appeared fairly tame; there were several small crevassed areas, but our chosen path missed these by at least 730 m. The gradient was 10° to 15° and was quite uniform. We considered not roping,

but clipped in anyway, since we had the rope all set up from the previous day. Paul led off onto the glacier and I followed on about 10 m of rope. The balance of the 45 m rope was divided between us and carried coiled. I had two short prussik loops on the rope and clipped into my body full harness; Paul had two long prussiks, but these were not attached to the rope. About 30 minutes into the glacier leg of our ascent, I heard the characteristic “whoof of snow settling under weight and looked up from my absorption with my ski tips to see that Paul had disappeared and had been replaced by a large hole some 6 m away. Coming out of this hole at a little less than the speed of light was a pink rope that was cutting a line through the snow directly to me, making an unforgettable whirring noise. Milliseconds later, the full force of 125 kg free-falling 9 m smashed me down face first into the snow. Then, silence.

After a brief and futile struggle to get up and a somewhat longer period of hyperventilation, I calmed down sufficiently to take stock of the situation. As Paul did not respond to my shouts, and as there was no doubt that his full weight was still on the rope, I assumed that he was either unconscious or was unable to speak. The impact had buried the upper part of my body about a foot below the surface; my right arm was free, but my left arm had only partial mobility and I could not move my upper body at all.

As our helicopter pick-up was 5 days and 8 km away, it was obvious that we would have to be our own salvation, and it was also obvious that to be of any help to Paul, I was going to have to get his weight off my body harness. By clearing away snow with my right hand, I could see that the lower lip of the crevasse ran down towards me and that I was about 30 to 60 cm downslope from it. His weight was being transmitted to my harness through one of my prussiks; the other prussik loop was loose.

With some difficulty, I got one ski off and was able to remove my pack. My plan was to establish a ski belay point, connect it as tightly as I could to the loose prussik or the rope clip-in carabiner, and then cut the rope loop that connected the two aluminum O-rings of my body harness together. This would cause Paul to drop a short distance further, but if it held, I would then be free to assist him. I first tried to place the ski vertically into the snow, but since it would not penetrate, and as I could not afford to drop it out of reach, I gave up on this project. Instead, I placed it horizontally under my chest, put a sling around its centre and attached this to the loose prussik. Then, with great difficulty, I was able to extract my survival bag from my pack that contained a small penknife. Having thus partially secured the situation, I then had a rest to consider what I should do next.

During all this time there had been no sound or motion from below. Now, there appeared to be something going on as the rope at my tie-in point was moving slightly. Some time later, Paul called up to say that he was prussiking up and within about 45 minutes he was back on surface, bruised with numerous cuts and scrapes, but otherwise intact.

He had no recollection of breaking through or falling. He, too, heard the ominous whirring sound, but his first memory was hanging free upside-down looking down into the darkness of the crevasse below. He had been able to uncoil his tail rope, tie his pack and skis onto this, organize his prussiks, and get above an overhanging lip onto a ramp from which he was able to call me.

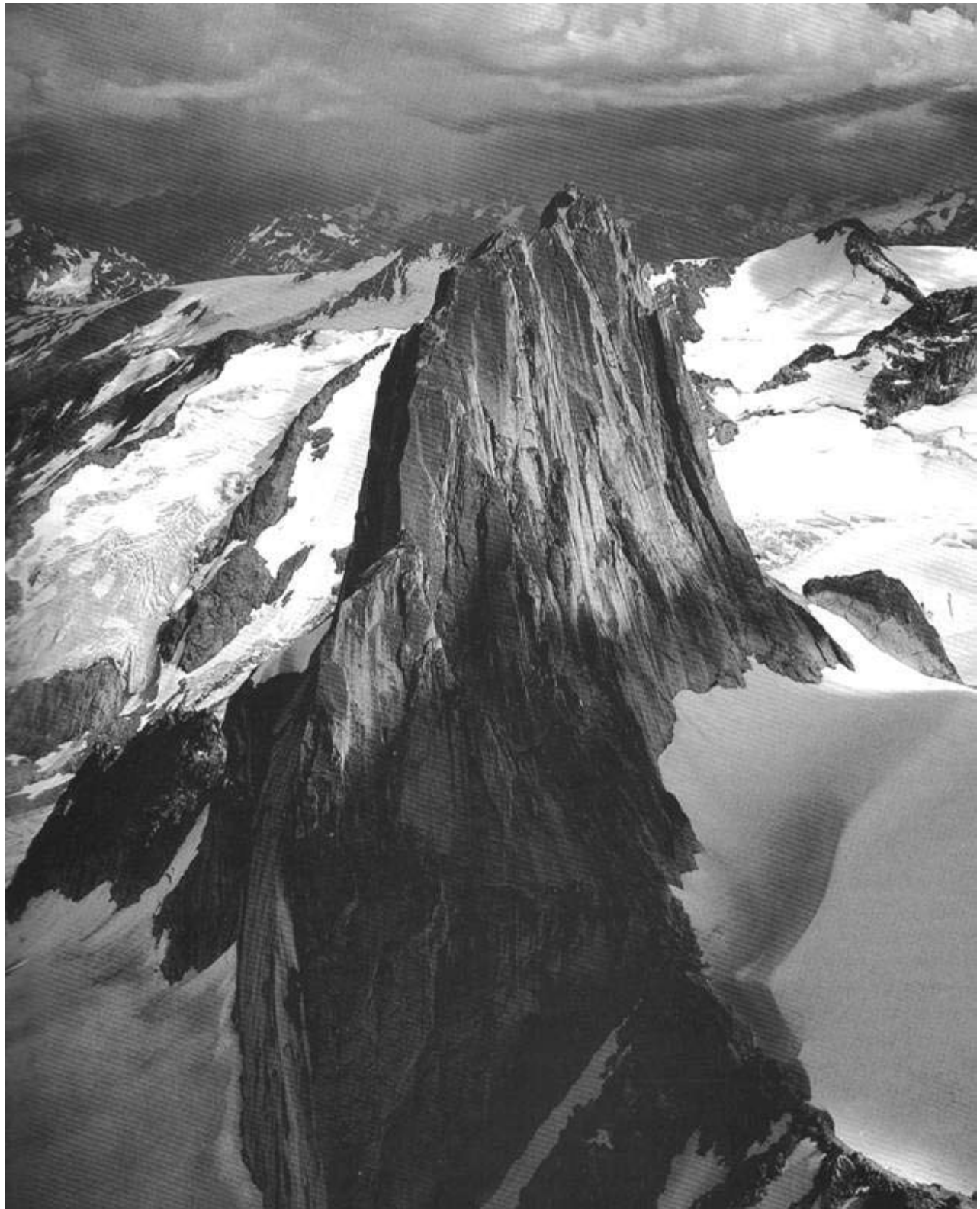
Within about two hours of the breakthrough, we started a slow and somewhat shaky descent down to our previous campsite, having lost our enthusiasm for Sir Wilfred Laurier.

What are the morals or lessons of this tale? Obviously, three or

more people are better than two, full body harnesses are better than seat harnesses alone, and if you are carrying prussiks, it is easier to put them on the rope upright in the light of day than hanging upside down in a crevasse. None of these are new or very interesting. The lesson that I learnt from this experience is that crevasses can occur anywhere on a glacier, regardless of what it looks like.

On the basis of the glacier's surface topography, there should have been no crevasse at this point. The two closest areas of visible surface disturbance were at least 700 m away to the left and right, and neither of these was anything to cause major concern. Looking at our tracks, it could be seen that Paul was actually skiing entirely over the crevasse along its longitudinal axis for some 6 m before it caved in. If it had held for another 3 m, I would have been over it too. The orientation of our path to that of the crevasse's axis was totally random, and purely by chance these two directions coincided at that point. If we had maintained separate tracks and tried also to keep vertically separated by as much as our 9 m of rope would allow, the chances of both falling in the same crevasse would probably have been reduced, but certainly not eliminated.

The only real lesson is to expect the worst and prepare for it.



Snowpatch Spire from Bugaboo Spire. Photo: Dave Stark.

# An Alberta Summer

Joe Josephson

I HAD BEEN ON BAFFIN ISLAND and, for a number of bizarre and unimaginable reasons, no climbing was to be had. Rather than play tourist and trek past all those great peaks to Summit Lake, I was compelled to retreat home to the great peaks of the Rockies. Baffin has nothing on the Rockies — except perhaps raw seal meat. For what was left of that summer, most of my time was spent watching the rain and working far too much. But, when the weather cleared, I began my courtship with the jewel of the Rockies — Mount Alberta.

Trevor and I swung five days off each. Our options were an unclimbed peak that Trevor knew about, or the North Face of Alberta. Many climbers would consider an untrodden summit the most desirable of all mountain experiences, yet we were drawn to that huge face lurking just over Woolley Shoulder. We were not to be the first nor the last. Mountains such as this have a draw to them like that old music tape that you've heard a thousand of times; you just can't resist its moving melodies one more time.

But what is it that draws people to this area? Is it the write up in the over-read 50 Classic Climbs? The publishing of a new guidebook? The history of great names and efforts? Or just the sheer wildness and beauty of it all? Perhaps all of these. You can research the stories and the noteworthy ascents through the books and journals, but they don't fully portray the adventure found on Mount Alberta. Aside from a personal experience, the greatest feeling of spirit can be found, strangely enough, in the Alberta Hut near the base of the East Face. Some people may question the need and aesthetics of a hut near Mount Alberta, and having used the hut, I can hardly criticize it's existence, but if anything is to explain the draw of the mountain, it would be the Log Book. More than an entry of names and routes, it is a journal of human history. The short, long, terse, arcane, epic, hilarious, banal, serious, awed, famous, unknown and the ridiculous are all chronicled there.

You can read about the people and adventures that don't get written up in the magazines. Sensationalism and drama are not needed, for on Mount Alberta they come naturally. You can read about Masamitsu (51 years old) and Yokoyama — they traveled here in honor no less than four times only to be repulsed each time by the magnitude and weather. With frightening regularity, there are tales of rare "ball lightning" jumping across the ridges. Found are the images from 35-pitch sieges, to bold solos. From his words, you can almost see the infamous 'Grande Frommage,' Dave Cheesmond, on his many trips and hard routes "over Woolley Shoulder". Passing time in a storm, you can be inspired by ascents of the North Face and amazed by gripping retreats. While you recover from the difficult slog up the scree you can catch up on the adventures of people you may know or perhaps have only heard of.

The log book sets the scene from August 1984 onwards. Pre-hut history is left to the journals, articles, word-of-mouth and the ever expanding mythology of Mount Alberta. The summer of 1992 found the log book with a new chapter. Not a finer chapter, and by no means better written than previous years, but with its fill of refreshing and amazing tales. By the time Trevor and I saw the peak in early August a number an unprecedented number of folks had already traveled before us.

After a long but stellar alpine season in Alaska and the Rockies,

Andy and Julie topped off their tour with the sixth ascent of the North Face. They did a fine job in good weather and were impressed by the length and difficulty, appalled by the grossness of the yellow band, and ready to clip bolts in California by the time they were done. Zippy and Glenn gave a typically modest and light-hearted account of an attempt on the remote and still unclimbed West Face. My good friend Bruce had been in with Murray and cruised the Japanese Route. Back in the city he was aching that I was up to do the North Face and he didn't have the time to come along. No matter how good a trip goes it seems the grass is always greener on the other side.

Drinking tea and napping the afternoon away at the hut I thought of our friend Frank, who was at the moment somewhere on the Japanese Route. What kind of experience was he having? We left, then slowly picked our way to the base of the North-East ridge, tired but anxious about the upcoming days. Then — Wow! — a person's first sight of the North Face is surely an unforgettable moment. Any one who finds their home and spirit in the mountains will be transfixed upon what is (at least in my relatively untravelled opinion), one of the most aesthetic of all mountain faces.

Descending a snow rib while looking for the descent point that takes us to the base of the face I stopped.

"Hey Trevor, look at this. It can't be!"

"You're right. Holy shit, I can't believe it!"

We had found fresh grizzly tracks in the sun-baked snow. He or she had pounded up from the depths of Habel Creek and across crevasse fields in search of food, perhaps trying to escape the thickness of the Athabasca Valley just as we try to escape the urban jungle. Almost certainly we were being watched as we traversed from the hut. As a climber I find the face to be utterly compelling; I could only imagine what a griz's to be in such a place. I did know that I was glad I hadn't been there 30 minutes earlier. After coming all that way up from the "Black Hole" only to find himself rimrocked with no where to go but the way he came he must have been pissed!

Leaving the hut and grizzlies behind, we descended to the base of the face, just as many aspiring parties had before us. The evening went beautifully with fresh water to drink, fine sand to stretch upon and soft light to behold. I kept telling myself it can't be any harder than Mount Chephren, a route I did in the spring. I felt capable, but overwhelmed with a sense of privilege to be venturing onto such a scene. We slept with dreams of big bears and big climbs.

The hardest part of any alpine route is getting your ass in gear and getting committed. We woke without hesitation and efficiently brewed and packed up. It is joyous to be climbing when you and your partner are both fit, keen and working together. In the pre-dawn ink we headed towards the wall.

We made good time up the ice pitches and onto the Yellow Band. There we slowed dramatically. At one of the belays I had lots of time to contemplate our tied off knifeblades, the pain in my bunions, how much I hated my boots, Trevor and the speed at which he's moving, the world and the vileness of the rock. This section of the wall is undoubtedly the most sinister and perhaps the most famous. It is here in 1980, that they believe Tobin ripped his belay and plunged to his demise in a tragic end to one of history's most inspired climbers. He was attempting the route in a style even

farther ahead of it's time than George and Jock's first ascent of the face may have been. I gazed across the expanse to my left as the face curved out to meet the North-East Ridge. Some people are calling this the "Wilford Variation," named after Mark traversed the band last year while retreating from a solo attempt of the North Face. I thought of my friend Sean who did the same traverse and also of the Coloradoans who did it long before Mark ever saw the face. I could imagine the fortitude and drive it took for Mark to continue up the difficult North-East Ridge after surely scaring himself silly.

At this point, our story of ascent becomes nothing out of the ordinary. Pitch-by-pitch accounts become trite with the same old drill of hard climbing, long belays, wet rock, wild moves and setting suns. It does, however have one good quality of a fine climbing tale — an epic retreat. Few experiences in my life have matched the desperation of dicking around for an A3 rappel station under a raging water spout, then having to stand for an hour while Trevor cleaned our fixed rope and reversed the traverse below the crux overhang. Andy and Julie mentioned a dry face; we had no such luck; snow on all the ledges and a night of thundershowers had us feeling like we were getting a body enema. The next stop down, I found a decaying horn of rock with a faded sling looped around it. Blazed upon the ratted nylon were the initials C.D.

I've heard how people call the rusted tin cans and scattered junk along the Chilkoot Trail in the Yukon 'antiques' and say they are part of history, for they tell of the people who travelled there in search of gold. This piece of tat, coated in limestone grime, looking like trash among this dark and beautiful obelisk, parallels those relics left behind during the gold rush. It sparks the images of Carl and his partner and their multi-day Homeric descent in the midst of Class 3 avalanches and trundling microwaves of rock. Their words are found in the log book, but it is that piece of webbing that really means something to me. Nervously using it to rappel, it touched me and now became part of our story.

That is what this article is all about: the stories, images and human history spawned by not only this great peak, but from all of climbing and the characters that make it come alive. The more I climb, the less I want to hear of grades and the more I want to hear and know the wild routes, in wild times, by wild spirits. Leave the grades for the guidebook. They are important only to give an aspiring party some idea of what to expect. In a place like the Columbia Icefields, technical letter grades don't mean squat compared to the "psyche grade". The rumors of hard men, forced bivouacs, rockfall and early winter storms build into a mythology that transcends the objectivity of it all. Years ago I can remember being at parties, and while half looped I would bravely mention a route to a climbing buddy or two and they would respond incredulously: "We can't go up there, that's a Greenwood route!" or "James backed off that one; no way man."

LAST AUGUST on Mount Alberta I found myself a victim of that mythology. We (or at least I) felt that we should be moving either up or moving down. It hadn't occurred to me to sit still and wait at the bivi to see if it cleared. So, for whatever reason, we bailed off the headwall, spent hours looking for safe pin placements in the black tile and then lurched ourselves down into the gauntlet of the iceface. Looking up at the wall, it truly seemed alive. A moving, breathing and malevolent creature that cast an image I may never forget. Not only was I a victim but I didn't realize at the time that we were becoming a part of the myth.

It happened so fast I barely recognized what was happening. I heard the crack and looked at Trev, who had just come down the rappel and reached my station. He seemed okay at first but then suddenly flopped over and spiraled across the ice. Many, many, many rocks were wizzing by constantly, with some of the smaller ones dinging off our helmets. I'm unsure of what exactly hit Trevor but the entire frontal lobe of his UIAA-certified Edelrid helmet disappeared, and a thick wool cap and balaclava underneath ripped. Miraculously, by the time the rock got through all of that and his mangy haircut, he had only a slight cut. Once he regained composure and clipped the station, I collected some shards of orange plastic from the ice as a mute token for Trevor. It was done. We were alive, and neither of us needed to say any more about the high probability of a second round, so we continued our almost robotic procedure of escape.

Fortunately the rest of the retreat went very smoothly and soon we were drying out in the sun near the base, sucking on a spot of tea. By the time we got back to the hut we were baked; utterly exhausted, hopelessly dehydrated, and quickly falling asleep as an Indian sun set far off into British Columbia.

The next morning we woke no earlier than 10 o'clock and humbly went about rehydrating, drying the ropes (no way did I want to carry such overweighted pigs back to the road), and pounding nails into the creaking outhouse. Soon I spied a familiar gait across the glacier. I hadn't seen it for months since he went off to Italy with Sly. Bubba was back, and alone. Manically driven, he was in for "What else — the North Face." After catching up on the history since we last spoke, much bullshitting, and lending him my rock shoes to add to an already-monstrous pack, we set off in opposite directions. Trev and I were off to the east and the car, our adventure was over and we were faced with nothing more than several hours of tiring pain-in-the-ass kind of hiking. He was off to the west. It was a sight I'll long remember: Bubba soloing across the glacier, hopping crevasses toward the North Face, an animated figurine almost stick-like. I thought of the places he's been, the drive and vision barely contained within, and looking forward to climbing with him more often, perhaps in a place such as this.

After arriving at Woolley Shoulder ten minutes before Trevor, I had some time to feel the cold wind and contemplate our experience. It is always difficult to back off such a route. They require so much thought, time, energy and emotional commitment that I believe it's one of the hardest quandaries I face as a climber. It is particularly hard when the route and skies clear off just after you've bailed. Thoughts pass rapidly back and forth between "Why couldn't I be more a hard man and just go for it" and "Good judgement man, paying our dues". I'm still young enough and passionately driven enough that I feel the urge to justify my actions. An emotion I struggle to accept more calmly.

DESPITE THE WRECKAGE of the attempt I could gaze across Alberta and North Twin and feel at home. The past two years have been filled with uncertainty and doubts about my job, whether I want to immigrate to Canada or return to my home state of Montana that I love so much, and generally which way my life is headed. Sitting upon one of the world's greatest vistas the connection I felt with the Rockies and with the spirits of the truly great friends I've found within were overwhelming. It was hard to turn my back and head down the scree towards the car and the uncertainties of the city.

Soon we ran into Tim and P.A. We were warned of their

presence by Bubba and were looking forward to telling them our tale. They had been planning this trip all summer and were fit, keen and overqualified. Trevor proudly showed his helmet. Tim thought the bucket was on his pack when it got hit and you could see the concern in his face as he wondered why Trevor wasn't wearing it. Tim has been involved with many rescues and recoveries of fallen climbers and could not believe that such damage could be inflicted with the owner of the head underneath escaping alive. The myth grows.

This leads to the final, and to me the most amazing, tale of the 1992 Alberta summer. This is not of epic retreats, bad weather or near death experiences. It is to give some overdue credit to Tim and P.A., two of the most unheralded alpinists in North America. Their ability, longevity, and record of ascents around the world anyone would find inspiring. They had been planning on the North Face for six months, plotting every piece of gear and counting every ounce. Their timing with the weather was perfect. This is the most crucial of all elements in success at Mount Alberta. As Choc says, "It's all timing and hormones."

They bivied, not at the safe, soft, sandy ledge near the rappel point, but bravely on the traverse ledge two pitches up the face. No one else has approached the face this way. Combining this early start to the ice face with their abilities, they cruised up to the Yellow Band, up the initial headwall pitches, past our rappel station and bivi ledge, over the crux overhang and polished off several pitches of hard free climbing before darkness halted their advance. They had even gotten off-route lower down while trying to force a direct line: often times a mistake that can stop a party dead in its tracks.

The pair had no stove, so were in dire need of some fluid. By now it was pitch black and the wall was swept clean of excess moisture by the rain, winds and sun, yet they could hear some water trickling down somewhere to the right. Drawing on his big wall experience from years back, Tim lowered down the plumb vertical headwall, and with 1000 m of air beneath him began a Yosemite-style King Swing. The sight this must have been boggles my mind.

How often is something like that done in the Rockies? But it paid off: Tim managed to reach the rivulet and fill two liters of water.

The guidebook mentions several excellent bivi ledges high on the route. This pair found only small ledges where they had to sleep on different levels and Tim had to suspend his feet in his pack out over the abyss. The next morning came casually; there is a strange amount of security found in biving this high on a great face. The crux is below you, the anxiety is done and you are virtually guaranteed to tick the route. This cannot be said for the unknown party they spied at first light. Far below, they were heading up the ice face. It is a wild year when a face like this, mired in such history, difficulty and remoteness, sees so many attempts. Some years it goes totally unseen.

After hooting to each other, the upper party rolled back to sleep knowing they had nothing more than moderate, fun climbing to the summit. Having been there, I know what the lower party was thinking: apprehensive of the hard climbing above and scared shitless of the objective danger on the iceface. And by the time Tim and P.A. got moving they could see the other party retreating across the glacier. Who knows what happened, but they must have been simultaneously glad and disappointed to be out of the grips of the face. They had their own reasons to work through and understand

just as I did. But for whatever purpose they backed off, perhaps it was intuition, they were lucky.

It started with a roar and erupted into a massive black cloud that charged down the face and darkened the glacier below. Tim and P.A. were witnessing house-sized blocks spontaneously ripping themselves from the flesh somewhere in the Yellow Band. Their previous bivi on the traverse ledge and the route the unknown party just travelled were all but obliterated. After they hiked the route, perhaps this was a signal by the God of Alberta for the pair to take heed and remember that no matter how good you and your timing are, the peaks always hold the trump card.

Comparing stories with Tim later that fall, he told me that the route was a culmination of more than 20 years of climbing. I'm sure it won't be the last great route for this "mild-mannered, ineffectual little fellow." Mount Alberta reminded me of the fullness climbing adds to life and deepened some of the reasons I climb: the challenge, the wildness, and most importantly the relationships with those around you. It spawned the ambition and dreams I have of high and hard places.

The rather remarkable Alberta Summer of 1992 came to a close in late August with the onslaught of the Rockies' infamous late season snows. I'd like to think of these stories as the compliment to the article called "The Many Moods of Alberta", a photo essay by Glen Boles in the 1983 Canadian Alpine Journal. His photos chronicle the scenes you may see as you make your pilgrimage to the peak. Here and in the hut book you'll catch a glimpse of the moods of the people who similarly travel.



The North Face of Mount Alberta.





Peter Arbic in the Rock Band, North Face of Mount Alberta. Photo: Tim Auger.

As the Earth is turning,  
spinning into itself,  
I am running  
In a dance of flowing blood.  
Of sinew and muscles  
    expanding and contracting  
    of lungs filling and emptying.  
And as I absorb the lingering  
energy of a setting sun,  
the air draws my heat away  
    in the form of heat.  
The ground absorbs my energy  
    in the form of motion.  
And my loud breath, my heat and my motion, are diffusing  
through a galaxy of molecules.  
Floating into the outer reaches of the universe  
Where energy once again becomes matter  
And matter forms another universe.

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## *Expedition Versus Exhibition*

### **Exploring The Need For Adventure**

*Bernadette Lynch*

In my home community of Banff, the local newspaper — which specializes in typos — recently went to print with an article on adventurers containing what can only be described as a Freudian slip in the world of climbing: it substituted the word exhibition for the word expedition. This error was rather humorous, but it also had a touch of irony that reminded me of something unresolved that had been nagging me for some time.

It began more than a year ago, on a cold November evening, in the middle of the Banff Festival of Mountain Films. I found my way, late as usual, to the door of Room 102 in the theatre complex of the Banff Centre. The words “Climbing Forum” were stuck with masking tape to the wall, left of the door. I hesitated, knowing that inside was a room full of people and a world of which I knew nothing.

Curiosity overcoming my reluctance, I opened the door and went in, to find that the only available seat was right up at the front; my penance for being late.

The moderator was speaking, summing up for the crowd the results of a day of brainstorming “ethical issues” in climbing. In these opening remarks, he outlined some concerns raised by a panel of local climbers and spoke of the need for a code. I listened carefully and took notes. He made lists on large sheets of paper, taped to the walls. He appeared very much in earnest, and even before the discussion had opened, seemed to be raising all the possible issues for the ensuing debate completely by himself, as though he could not contain his own questions.

I looked around the room. People were listening in rapt attention, men and some women, all in outdoor gear. Against the wall were seven men — what I took to be the panel, having missed the introductions. They were all big, well-seasoned-looking outdoorsmen, sitting with their backs to the wall, some staring straight ahead, not focussing on anything in particular. Like first

contact with an alien species, I couldn’t take my eyes off them. They were fascinating to watch as the proceedings continued, with the moderator working hard, attempting to generate an open discussion with a view to reaching consensus and even a united statement, a code of ethics for climbing in this area, the Bow Valley.

I wondered if they were listening and I reached the conclusion, judging by their expressions, that this discussion on climbing ethics was not going over all that well with these guys; “Ah, this is going to be interesting,” I thought to myself.

This meeting, which I attended on a whim, turned out to be the genesis for an eleven-part lecture series at the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies in Banff, for which I am the public programmer.

The inspiring, or at least provocative, event in Room 102 back in November was not the origin of the series because of anything said, but rather because of what was not said. The currents coming from the rogues’ gallery of experienced climbers against the wall were enough “to singe the hairs on the back of your neck” (as my grandmother might have said). Why had the panel consented to participate? Why were they so careful not to verbally commit themselves, other than through an extreme and reactionary little outburst now and then? I came away with mixed feelings: my first thought was that I had witnessed the dying moments of a breed of renegades, or a cult of what I assumed might be called First Ascentionists (or some such secret handshake), and I felt sad for them. However, my overwhelming reaction was that of curiosity. These were clearly individuals who had achieved some form of importance, or perhaps notoriety, and they were, through this forum, being given the opportunity to make some decisions about the nature of adventure, the environment I shared with them, and the evolution of sport in my community. I felt that this empowerment

was an unsettling thing to witness, but that it was also somewhat consistent with the authority that mountaineers have enjoyed in the culture around Banff for sometime. I discovered that some of the attitudes I witnessed that day were in fact celebrated historically, even to the point of recognizing that these people were the inheritors of a tradition which has even been labelled heroism in this country.

As a relative newcomer to this country, I learned that heroism has always been associated with Canada's cultural myth of the extraordinary individual, possessing extreme courage, who braves and conquers the harshest tests of nature that this cruel land has to offer. In particular, here in the Rockies, a landscape that has played such an enormously symbolic part in that history and sense of cultural identity, I became fascinated with the metaphor of men and their relationship with mountains. In my professional life, I found myself having to explain the role of such heroes in the history of this place, quickly realizing, as I discovered in room 102, that they may still be among us. I resolved to embark on my own public adventure, through a lecture series at the Whyte Museum in Banff, itself the historical repository for such mountain lore.

The project was entitled "On the Edge: Exploring the Boundaries of Adventure" and attracted 1700 people to the 11 presentations — a record for Whyte Museum programming.

If I had to distill the entire lecture series down to one question, it would have to be "Why?" I thought that if one could understand the motivation behind these modern-day adventurers, one might come closer to understanding those heroes of the past. What I did not realize at the beginning, but quickly came to see as the series unfolded, was that we were not talking about a sport or even one particular way of life, but that climbing was a metaphor for life.

It became obvious that these seemingly free-spirited mountain men and (increasingly) women, challenging themselves in the vertical playgrounds of the world, had exactly the same concerns, self-doubts and need for a deeper spiritual meaning that we all do — and their fear that analysis of the experience will remove its purity is that of the religious purist who speaks of faith.

For those of us here in the valley bottom, to listen to the extolling of the wonders of the high-altitude world is to experience envy. We freely lend emotional support, in principle, for those we perceive as perhaps the last true free-spirits. We don't understand them but we want to live vicariously through them.

As became apparent in our series, however, problems and contradictions in the lives of heroes arise when these free-spirits collide with the reality of commercial exploitation and environmental regulation — facts of social life on the planet today. In a world in which thirty-two people were crowded onto the small peak of Everest in one day, as happened this year thanks to eco-tourism, can there be anywhere high enough or remote enough to avoid this reality? And why should climbers, who essentially engage in a form of recreation no more or less valuable than a host of others, be exempt from regulations or cry the blues when their increasingly commercial and glamorous lifestyle becomes the desire of the many as opposed to the prerogative of the few?

With the increasing dependence on commercial support and the media creation of more mountain heroes (e.g., the free solo climber), the question inadvertently asked by the newspaper remains: are these expeditions or exhibitions? Are these climbers consciously allowing themselves to be set up as objects of emulation? If so, what are we learning from them and what are they learning from themselves?

I concluded the series with a deep feeling of dissatisfaction, in spite of the very positive reaction to each and every program. I felt that we had only begun to scratch the surface — for the most part, we had ended up praising Caesar rather than examining his motives. Yes, we met and were enthralled with the awesome exploits of many adventurous men and women, our latter-day heroes, who make this their way of life — but, other than some brave attempts at personal discourse, significantly by a panel of women climbers, what did we learn? What did we experience other than a desire to emulate the climbing heroes and a conviction that their peaks will nonetheless remain, for most of us, somewhere just out of reach.

The Latin word *adventurus* means "about to arrive." What we attempt, through the metaphor of mountains, is an understanding of ourselves, or as Mallory put it, "an understanding of life itself." What is being played out in the world of mountain climbing is perhaps exactly that search, which is beyond words and explanations. What is searched for, as Mallory suggests, is the pure and essential joy of living, and as such, perhaps we should hold our tongues, as did the reluctant panel of silent climbers in Room 102. Perhaps we should confine the truth of the experience to the climbers' own personal and unspoken relationship with the spiritual wall of the mountain itself.

But is that really enough? I don't think so. Someone, a former climber, said that mountains are poor recipients for dreams. If we look to them for more, will they provide — will they listen to — our dreams? Are they anything other than very large hunks of rock? Someone else, a philosopher, pointed out that the unexamined life is not worth living — and yet climbers appear to be extraordinarily reluctant to publicly analyze their experience, other than at a superficial level.

It seems certain, with recent demands for regulation for example, that self-examination is a process that climbers will find themselves increasingly forced to participate in, and one which will require an answer to the question "Why?" A defensive reaction only serves to alienate those who genuinely wish to understand, and who perhaps increasingly have the right to ask.

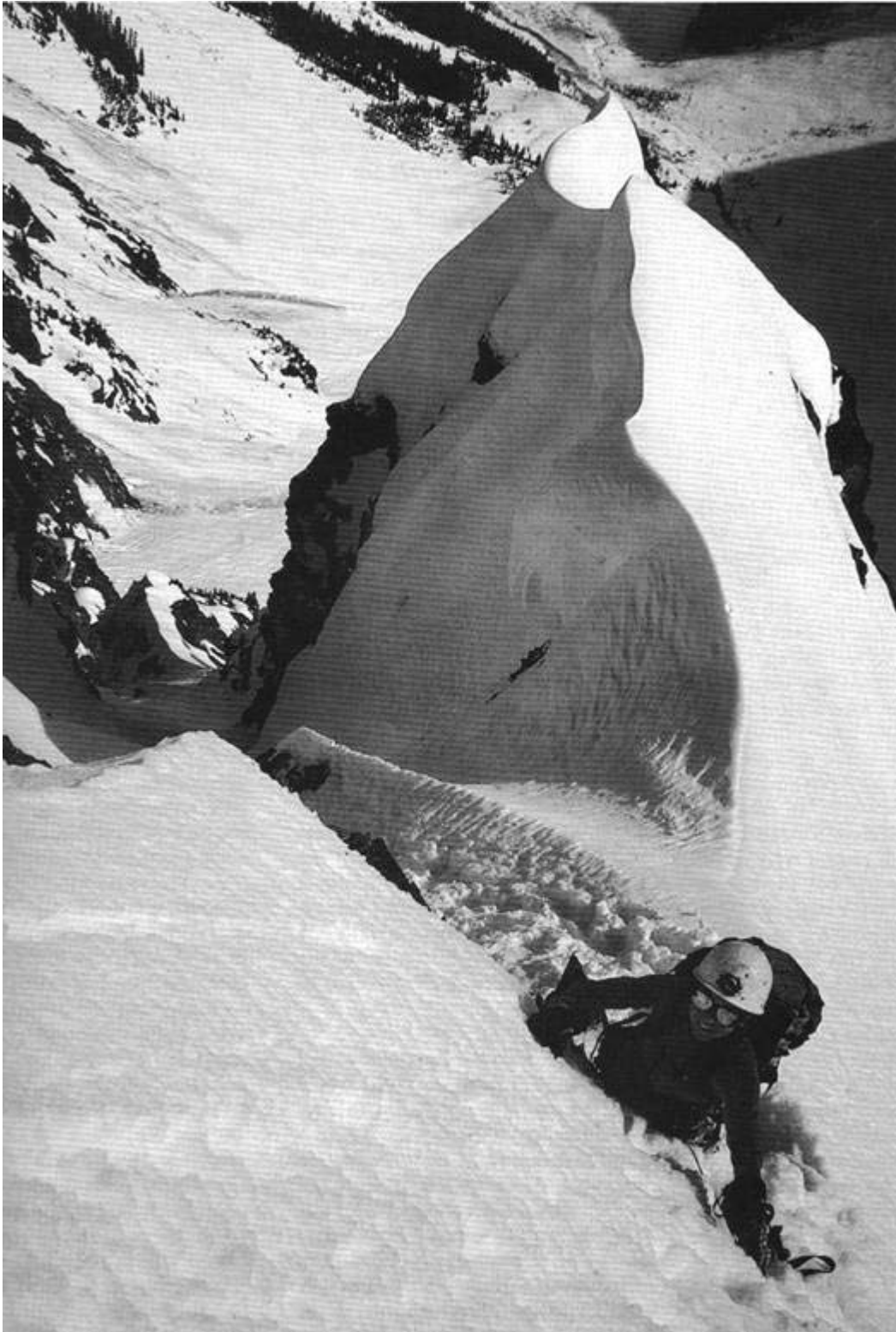
In many subsequent discussions with purist or old-school mountain climbers, I discovered a virulently knee-jerk reaction against the new generation of rock-climbers — primarily younger sport climbers learning their skills indoors, on gym walls. As an outsider, it is fascinating to watch this negative reaction from the old guard to what appears to simply be a cheaper, more universally available, version of the same activity. This reaction appears to go beyond the legitimate concern regarding environmental impact, the physical evidence left behind by sport climbing enthusiasts. Peter Croft recently reflected this pre-conception when he suggested, "This new generation is not environmentally conscious — they are more me-oriented." But was the previous generation significantly better, or has the increased climbing population simply focussed attention on a condition that has always existed, camouflaged by the relatively few serious climbers in the mountains? Like it or not, we are all participants in a shrinking world. Like that lesson we learned in kindergarten, we have to share.

At this year's Festival of Mountain Films, Peter Croft offered a better explanation of the climber's motivation, in my opinion, than any other I have heard, when he likened climbing and mountaineering to the playful activity of children. Why not? Young children learn who they are by exploring their world. The climber attempts to learn who he or she is when faced with the difficulties of getting to the top of the mountain.

It is this search for identity which is intrinsically human, wherever we choose to look for it. It is a search which becomes ever more difficult amongst the confusion and demands of our lives. The question for me becomes whether there is a point at which balance no longer exists, where over-zealous commitment to climbing, or any other avocation, becomes mere escapism, or

worse, elitism. Does it help one deal better with the stresses and routines of daily life, with one's fellow human beings?

I still want to ask this of that defensive bunch of climbers, with their backs to the wall. I want to ask, because I believe we are all on the same difficult climbing route, whether they admit it or not. And maybe we could throw a rope to each other.



Helen Habgood topping out on a new route, Northeast Face of Mount Payne. See page 73. Photo: Don Serl

# *High Camp - A Lighter Side of the Game*

## *Future Possibilities*

*Paul Adam*

I had always thought that climbs to the summit of Everest were diminished because no one had ever climbed every single metre of the mountain, so I was interested to read in the 1991 American Alpine Journal that Tim Macartney-Snape had ascended Everest from sea level under his own steam without the use of bottled oxygen. Because an expedition led by Edmund Hillary had managed a similar journey by boat in the 1980s, Macartney-Snape had upped the ante by swimming to the mountain from the mouth of the Ganges. After mulling over this feat for a time, I began to feel his approach, while admirable, would have been more valid if he had not used a plane to get to Calcutta from his home in Australia. It is now my considered opinion that, as fine an accomplishment as Macartney-Snape's was, an ethically pure ascent of Everest remains to be done. Everest will remain truly virgin until someone walks out their front door and hoofs it every step (or stroke) of the way to the summit and back again.

Upon reaching this conclusion, I began to think of some other ways the ascent could be improved, and followed that by thinking of some further climbs and mountain adventures that needed to be done.

The ascent of Everest could be improved in two ways:

Starting from the Dead Sea. If not starting from your doorsill, then the preferred starting point would be the Mediterranean Sea near Tel Aviv. From there, the route would drop down to the Dead Sea, the lowest point on dry land at 400 m, ascending through Jordan, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan and India before joining the regular route in Kathmandu.

From Challenger Deep in the Marianas Trench. At 11,033 m below sea level, this is the lowest point on the surface of the earth. Starting here would give an ascent of 19,881 m (or 22,032 m if ascending Chimborazo; see note below). In order to maintain the purity of Macartney-Snape's ascent, oxygen tanks should not be used at any time while attempting the project. Since artificial aids are prohibited in ascending Everest, they should be avoided on the descent of Challenger Deep as well. This means that the use of weights to aid the rate of descent would not be kosher.

It should be noted that Challenger Deep has been bottomed only once, in 1960 by Jacques Piccard and Don Walsh using the bathyscaph Trieste, leaving all sorts of opportunities for stylistic improvements and new routes.

(It should be noted that if we were to measure the height of mountains from the centre of the earth instead of from sea level, the highest peak would be Mount Chimborazo in Ecuador, because of the elliptical shape of the globe [see Guinness Book of Records]. It would be 2151 m higher than Everest. This technical adjustment could easily be accommodated by adjusting the routes as needed to meet the spirit of the above goals.)

With the Everest (or Chimborazo) problem taken care of, I would like to turn your attention to Five Mountain Problems for the Twenty-First Century and Beyond that exist on this planet:

Hawaiian Trough to Mauna Kea: the world's greatest direct ascent from base to summit. At 10,203 m of direct ascent, Mauna Kea is one of only two 10,000 m peaks on the planet; the other being nearby Mauna Loa. Both could be accomplished in one trip. The style should be the same as the Challenger Deep-Everest (Chimborazo) climb.

Tonga Trench Seamount: this climb rises from a base at -9055 m to a summit at -365 m, giving a 8690 m elevation gain. This is the world's tallest mountain completely covered by water. Scuba gear should not be used.

3) The Ring of Fire: the ultimate drainage circuit in the world and a great objective for the person who is into extended backpacks. There are two spurs which give access to the main crest: (1) the Indonesia Spur - this is gained at the west end of Sumatra; and (2) the Kiwi Spur - this starts somewhat south of the South Island of New Zealand and winds its way up to Tonga and through Melanesia to New Guinea. The crest proper starts in Irian Jaya, then follows the edge of the Pacific Ocean around to Tierra del Fuego. Tricky traverses between landfalls and a large number of active volcanoes will keep the trip interesting. For the best style, all necessities should be carried in the pack — no airdrops or grocery store stops — a likely John Clarke project.

The Mid-Atlantic Ridge: from Bouvet Island to Iceland, this obvious and compelling line is waiting to be done. A direct line between spreading continental land masses of great length with sporadic islands providing occasional respites from underwater climbing. The major difficulties on this route are caused by the fracture zones that cross the main ridge axis at right angles. Because of the amount of underwater climbing, ethically weak individuals will no doubt demand external air, although the use of a long straw instead of scuba gear would minimize the moral compromise. Another John Clarke project.

Arctic Ocean Ridges: for the winter mountaineer, the three ridges (Nansen, Lomonosov and Mendeleyev) of the Arctic Ocean offer a fine challenge. Although considerably shorter than the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, these ridges stay below the surface in their entirety. The covering of the surface by ice nearly year-round means that the use of scuba gear would not be considered a major violation of ethical standards. The cold water temperature will require the development of specialized underwater winter gear. The climbing of all three ridges would make a fine lifetime goal.

5) Sahara Desert Ski Traverse: unfortunately for the backcountry skier, this route rarely comes into condition. On the occasions it does, the trip from Egypt to Mauritania would offer a variety of exciting challenges, such as large dune fields, the traverse of the Tibesti Mountains and the crossing of the Nile. The Nile, which seldom freezes thick enough to cross without danger, is the Traverse's Khumbu Icefall and would likely end many an attempt before it could begin. Because of the Nile crossing, this trip would best be done east to west.

With the five final great mountain problems on the earth identified and discussed, let us move on to five great problems in the solar system:

1) Olympus Mons: this is the solar system's highest known peak, towering between 24,000 and 27,000 m above the surface of Mars. The peak is well guarded by cliffs that encircle about 75% of the 600 km diameter base. Careful interpretation of air photographs indicates that a straightforward, largely non-technical route is

likely to exist on the northwest side. This approach is recommended in part because it brings you out on the higher side of the 80 km-wide summit caldera. Since the air pressure at the base is considerably lower than that found at the summit of Everest, the use of bottled oxygen would seem to be a necessity, although an oxygenless trip would be a milestone in its time. An ascent started from the bottom of Valles Marineris, the solar system's greatest canyon, would add 8000 m of ascent and a major cross-planet traverse, and would show elan and style of the highest degree.

Io-Mount Prometheus: this moon of Jupiter has a number of active volcanoes which offer the possibility of interesting ascents. The only pictures we have of Mount Prometheus and the other volcanoes show them actively erupting; however, by the time of the first climbing party's arrival chances are that the eruptions will have stopped. If the eruptions continue, there may be some non-erupting volcanoes available for climbing.

Mirandan Cliffs: a rock climber's dream on a moon of Uranus, with a 20,000 m-high and 100 km-long cliff. Available photographs are not clear enough to have

allowed the identification of any lines, but the scale of these cliffs likely means that there would be enough great routes to keep rock climbers from needing to worry about overlapping routes for more than a little while. The limited amount of sun will put off some rock jocks, but for the hardier rockclimber, it might be paradise. Cliffs may be covered with ice, so the packing of ice gear on the trip would be recommended to avoid the disappointment of a long journey and no climbing.

Triton: this moon of Neptune is a backcountry skier's paradise. With nearly 24 million square kilometres of frozen terrain that varies from large frozen lakes to rolling hills covered in ice blocks, this moon is similar to the coastal icefields that are so loved by the intermediate skier, but on a much vaster scale. It should be noted that there is some evidence of volcanic activity and that with temperatures of -236°C, depth hoar might be a problem.

Maxwell Monies: this Venusian volcano rises 12,000 m above the Venusian equivalent of sea level. Although the rectangular base measures nearly 700 km by 400 km, the mountain is very rugged in its construction with the west face being

the piece de resistance from the galactic mountaineer's point of view. The west face consists of 5000 m steep slopes topped by 6000 m cliffs that end a short distance from the summit. A fine challenge for the "alpine" mountaineer, although climbing can be done in shorts, given the high temperatures (450° C). Crushing air pressure, and large amounts of O and CO<sub>2</sub> will add to the difficulties the mountaineer will face.

This list is hardly meant to be comprehensive, but rather is simply a starting point for those committed climbers with an eye for purity and a bit of time and money on their hands.

## *Pawing The Void*

### Chapter 21 — The Crevasse

Like my namesake, I've discovered that even if I play all my cards wrong, I can still suck fame out of the most despairing of epics. Unlike my namesake, however, if I took a dive and broke a leg, at least I'd have another three to hobble away on. I'm actually a little ashamed to be named after him — Joe Simpson dragged himself around Siula Grande with an ineptitude only humans can find heroic; we dogs demand a little more of ourselves. My recent trip to the ever-terrifying Columbia Icefields was a shining example of dogged courage in the face of tremendous adversity.

In the worst weather, a dog will curl up in front of the fireplace and wait for a woman with nails to scratch his belly. When a ferocious blizzard hit Canmore on the first Friday in April, I hoped that my so-called master would look for a woman to scratch both our bellies and give up his ill-fated plans for a ski. In retrospect, of course, believing he would give up climbing plans was even more absurd than expecting him to be able to find a woman. No, instead, he's on the phone on Friday night making plans

for a 5:30 a.m. departure, and I overhear him asking the other stupid bugger if it's okay to bring me along. He says I'd be really upset if I was left behind; climbing partners seem to be able to lie to each other with the greatest of ease. I groan, wishing I could find one of his ski boots to eat the sole off of, and he gets off the phone, minces over to me and starts with some crap about, "Are you excited to be going skiing, Tucky...?" Of course I'm excited, you stupid arse, I've seen you in a white-out, and we're all going to die...

So we go anyways, and it turns out that the other bugger is an Alpine Clubber, so I'll probably end up being led around Banff by some turkey in lederhosen. And, the guy's name is Shackleton, so we'll probably end up spending the whole winter on the Icefields, only to die, just like his namesake. Typically, the Icefields are whited-out from stem to stern, and they have to take their first compass bearing off the bumper of the car. All the way up the tongue that day, they try to laugh about the ridiculous situation they're about to drag me into, as if they really enjoyed the prospect of our

collective deaths. Stopping to huff and puff by the beginning of the headwall, they first introduce the idea of a retreat, and to offer my support, I grab the string of the compass and try to help us all by throwing it into a crevasse. For this, for God's sake, I get hit! Me, who can save their lives, HIT! I trot ahead because I can smell a rather tasty present left behind by the previous party...

As we start up the headwall, the master decides that he now wants me tied to him so I "don't get lost." This is ridiculous, because I'll have to go his pace, which is 30 m between stops while he "navigates." "Navigating" is a fat bastard's word for catching his breath, I've noticed. We'll never catch up to the advance party if we go this slow, and I can smell that they've got real food, not the freeze-dried crap these buggers are carrying, "to test for the Himalaya" — again, an excuse for being too weak to earn real food. So, I'm tied in, but every time I pull on the rope to get the buggers moving, the two of them kick and swear, and they finally stop to have a talk about untying me. Right in the middle of the Athabasca Glacier, where thousands

*Tukche Simpson*

of people probably die in crevasses every-year. They talk about what a "pain" I'm being, and they decide that I should be untied right there, abandoned like poor old Joe, hanging over the edge of the sérac, waiting for Simon to cut the rope.

Cut loose, I wander not two feet before he shouts to me, "Tukche-stay close by! There are crevasses around!" Of course I'm going to stay close by, you bonehead (and I don't mean bone in the scrumptious sense of the word!) — I have to follow if I want any dinner at all. And sure enough, ten feet later, the big dive! Right through one of the bridges that these bastards had just said were "hard as a rock this time of the year." I fall and fall and fall, and whumph!, land on the narrowest of bridges spanning the crevasse. As embarrassed as I am to say it, I can only tell you that I landed like... a cat. Ten metres, on a bridge that extended about a metre out on either side of me before the crevasse dropped off forever, I lay awaiting my doom.

Cold settled in quickly, with little dustings of spindrift covering me in seconds. I knew the boys had seen me disappear, and would soon come looking. The master simply couldn't last without

his "chick magnet," but I thought I'd better scope out the scene in case they were too stupid to figure out a rescue. A long slot, widening quickly, with a couple of bridges like mine loomed in the bleak distance. One looked like a poodle, the other like a Milk Bone. I thought I'd try to jump to the Milk Bone, because it might lead up and out of the hole, but when I got a paw on it, the thing collapsed into dust, and I just about went snout over tail into the abyss. I yelped and this seemed to waken the two above into action. It turned out later that the master had come to the edge, and not seeing me, had begun the funeral preparations a mite early. Shackleton, it seems, had moaned on about them being better off, because I was ruining the trip anyway...

When the master looked again after the yelp, he saw me this time and started in with that incredibly stupid baby-talk shit that humans try on the more dignified species. Like, I really want to have a conversation about "Whadda goo' boy" I am, when I'm on the edge of my eternal goddamn reward! Years of climbing training came in handy here as the master rapped into the hole and dumped about six tons of snow on top of me, burying me completely. He panicked

because he thought I'd fallen off the ledge, and the last thing I wanted to do is shake the snow off and collapse my perch. He came all the way down to me though, and when I saw him step on the ledge, I realized it must be stronger than I thought if it could support his fat ass, so I stood up and he saw me just before he impaled me with his crampons.

After what seemed at least half an hour of them screwing up every system of rescue in the book, they finally figured out how to do a simple two-to-one pulley, and they smashed me back and forth up the sides of the crevasse. I finally flopped over the top... and then, they started yelling at me! Like I asked to be untied and exposed to my very own death! So when we started off again, and I had to endure nonsense from them like, "Jesus, we were lucky the dog found the slot — it could have been one of us!", and "Now he's all wet, he'll have to sleep outside...." I just smiled, and thought back to the day at the vet's when he told her to cut them off, and I thought to myself -one day when you're asleep, man, one day... CHOMP!

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## *The Inner Ranges - Thoughts about the Mountain World*

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### *The Psycho/Physical Edge*

A philosophy of survival

Steve DeMaio

A letter from my brother:

Stephen,

*Since I heard the news I have been feeling really bad. It hurts when someone's dreams are gone forever. I sense your sadness. I know your frustration: Dad told me you did everything you could, hanging from the ropes on that vertical wall, in order to revive your friend. There is pain when a spirit is lost. Brother, I understand the danger of climbing, and it will always be there. When a fellow climber dies it is like someone took the song out of the birds... and all that is left is the birds. Try to comfort your friend's family if you can.*

*Dad told me the story of the accident. That North Face of Loughheed must be a savage place. Dad said you could have*

*got the chop just trying to retreat from the wall. Man, I didn't want to go to work today. "Throw away the shovel and run!" You know, Mom says that when you are climbing she pretends as though you are in the Vietnam war...*

I could envision our mother, alone in our family room, late at night, gazing up at my picture on the wall. She would be dealing with her fears of my climbing in the same way she had seen her parents deal with the tragedy of friends and nephews sent off to war. But she never told me not to go climbing. Rather, she would put an emergency space blanket in each of my climbing jackets along with a lighter and extra batteries for the miniature flashlight she had bought for me and cleverly slung on a shoe lace so I could hang it around my neck while climbing. "See," she said as she demonstrated the principle, "you can hold it in your teeth and keep your hands free to climb!" That little light has saved me from more than one cold bivouac.

Excited, she would burst into my room,

"Look at these gloves! Jeff Lowe uses them for mixed climbing." One morning I woke to pack my climbing gear (which was spread out all over the living room of my parents' home) to find my system of tarps and green garbage bags replaced by a Gore-Tex bivy sack with a note attached: "Pay me later. Don't tell your Father."

Those were early days, naive days. The summer of 1988 had been different. A friend and climbing partner had been killed during our attempt on the unclimbed North Face of Mount Loughheed in the front ranges of the Canadian Rockies. My parents, I knew, were shaken.

Over Christmas dinner that year I was surrounded by a table of questioning and sullen eyes. I knew the worth of my passion for the mountains was in doubt, and the pay back of the risks taken was in question. I tried to explain both the different kinds of danger present in the mountains and my actions to combat those dangers. Over the years I had developed a climbing philosophy, a philosophy of survival. This philosophy is embodied in what I call "The

Psycho/Physical Edge.”

Objective dangers, I explained, are those over which you have no control. They exist to the same degree for every climber at any instant of time, whether with ten years or ten weeks of climbing experience. Things like avalanche, loose rock and weather conditions are objective dangers. Each climber does his best to avoid such conditions, however, once climbing, these dangers are accepted as a given.

The other form of danger is subjective danger. Subjective factors are those elements of risk which fall within a climber's locus of control. These factors include a climber's level of experience, physical and mental endurance, gymnastic ability, ability to focus, concentrate, relax and solve problems under stress as well as a climber's technical knowledge of systems and rope work.

The Psycho/Physical Edge itself, existing as a measure in all of us, determines what level of seriousness and/or difficulty a climber is physically and mentally capable of dealing with. This measure is not simply cut and dried, however. For example, a climber could physically be capable of completing a given set of moves, but without the safety of a rope or protection, the sequence might be psychologically overwhelming. The situation may also occur where the climber is mentally capable but physically unable to complete a given sequence. Accurate knowledge of one's physical and mental capabilities is crucial for safe climbing.

No one can climb at the true upper limit of their ability all the time. What may be well within your range on one day might be foolish for you to attempt on another. Your limit may exceed your partner's on a given day while his may exceed yours the next day. Be aware that your Psycho/Physical Edge may change its position in a matter of hours, or even minutes, depending on the nature of your current situation or your state of mind.

State of mind is a critical factor affecting climbing ability. Your mental endurance, ability to concentrate for long periods of time and your ability to relax and focus under stress determine your climbing potential. Ask yourself: What has been happening in your personal life: Are you distracted or stressed more than usual. Are you exhibiting excessively negative or positive thought patterns concerning the situation on hand? It is critical that you know your mind and how its state affects

your psycho/physical ability.

Physical capabilities are easier to define and measure. They include physical endurance, gymnastic ability and general health. Consider: Have you been sick lately or sleeping and eating properly: How much climbing/training have you been doing? Can you exert yourself hour after hour, day after day, and still remain in control?

Many of these life factors seem to have little to do directly with the act of climbing; however, they constitute the core of the Psycho/Physical Edge. An assessment of these factors, along with the implementation of your acquired climbing judgement will enable you to evaluate a situation correctly.

Judgement comes from experience. Experience is not “what happens to you,” but rather, your ability to apply found knowledge to other more complex situations. Proficiency and effectiveness must be worked at on each climb. It is essential to learn many ways to solve the same problem. Your rope work and climbing systems must become second nature. Many suggest that if you survive enough experiences, and learn from them, you will acquire good judgement.

The philosophy of The Psycho/Physical Edge is the climber's tool. This tool supplies the climber with a process with which the climber may evaluate alternatives and make decisions regarding a particular ascent.

Apart from objective danger, the greatest risk for an experienced climber occurs at the instant he steps beyond his Psycho/Physical Edge. While climbing, you must evaluate your own physical and mental capabilities and then accurately balance them against the difficulties and dangers of your position. This analysis must determine if indeed you are capable of dealing with the given situation. This process must continue for the duration of the climb and you must act on this analysis. This may involve retreat on occasion.

By monitoring and staying within your physical and mental limits you can reduce the risks involved to those that are purely objective. The instant a climber steps beyond his Psycho/Physical Edge he has, by choice, stepped into a region of unnecessary danger. It is unfortunate, but many deaths occur this way. Know yourself. When facing a serious climb or lead, you must cut through everything you think you are and know exactly what you are. You must decide if “what you are” is capable of dealing with the given situation.

The crux of any climb is to determine the true line, the true edge.

If you make a choice to climb into a situation beyond your capability, you often make that discovery of your error only when it is too late to change your mind. You have blown it. The situation rapidly goes out of control. You have climbed yourself into a cul-de-sac where there are no options. You fall, sustain injury or are killed. Yet, it is important to recognize that outside the realm of objective danger, if you die, it is your own fault. Take action. The sharper the analysis of your physical and mental capabilities and the more accurate your evaluation of the difficulty and danger of what you wish to climb, the greater your chance of surviving.

During the first ascent of “The Gambler” (5.11), a climb on the north-facing Rim Wall in the Rockies, the rain had just stopped. Thunder boomed and cloud still surrounded us. I used a sock coated in chalk to dry my hand and foot holds. Three hundred feet of hard climbing separated us from the top of the wall, it was late, and I had no time to wait for the rock to dry. I wiped and dried my way up the steep wall to a point just below a bulge in the rock, twenty-five feet above the belay. I hung there poised precariously on the damp holds. With the precision of a goldsmith, I used the pick on my rock hammer in my attempt to tap a wire into a bottoming crack. At the same moment, my partner Jim voiced his opinion, “Your idea of a gully is ludicrous!” His voice lashed out at me.

Stung by his words, struggling to speak calmly, I hissed, “Look, I can't climb this alone. I need your help! I can't do it by myself!” The terrain was serious. I knew I could not deal with it mentally without support from the lads. From Choc, who was also below, came “Give 'er nails, man!”

Jim remained silent and I continued.

Fifty feet later, out of balance and breathing heavily, I blinked and snorted to clear chalk dust from my eyes and nostrils. Leaning back on my finger tips, I could see that the rock above me continued to overhang slightly. Consciously, I placed my fingers more securely on a square-cut finger hold and adjusted my left toe to take some weight off my arms. Making a quick glance down thirty feet to my last piece, I saw that if I fell from here, I would hit a ledge before the rope came tight. Falling off in this place was not an option. It is in positions such as this that the psycho/physic must be applied most accurately.



My arms began to tire. Searching for an opening in the rock, my eyes scanned the length of a microseam only inches away. Could I pound a knife blade piton into that seam? The protection would be appreciated, to say the least. But to try, and fail to get a piton in, would waste valuable strength. Stopping to drill a bolt would waste valuable time and mean a certain bivouac in uncertain weather. Could I focus enough to climb the next twenty feet without any protection? I felt good. I felt strong. There appeared to be a line of holds. Analyzing, I hung there...

The analysis was based on an evaluation of my mental and physical state, knowledge of my ability balanced against what I judged the difficulty and danger to be. I assessed and began climbing.

As I climbed the evaluation continued. Good hold? Yes. Place foot. OK. Uh, no, further left? Yes. Good? Yes? No! — loose, can't trust that one. Rationally, move after move, I judged whether I could complete the sequence without falling. As I progressed upward, the decision was continuously remade: to climb, or not to climb. It was this process that allowed the completion of this particular pitch, which in retrospect, still stands as my most serious and situationally involved lead to date.

Other factors which directly or indirectly affect the position of your Psycho/Physical Edge and the effectiveness of your decision-making are the completion of case studies on problem solving, protection and how well you place it, choice of climbing partners, and intuition.

Case studies can help you prevent mishaps and solve problems more efficiently when they do arise. Learn the best way to do things and never take short cuts. Your rope work and your systems are your base. Errors in this domain are unacceptable. Slow and sure is better than quick and out of control.

Learn to be an artist at placing protection both when it is hard to find and difficult to place. The seriousness of any given section of rock is directly related to the amount and quality of protection placed. A master can find protection where others can not and thus can venture safely onto terrain that would be suicidal for others.

When contemplating serious climbs, choose your partners carefully. Good friends don't necessarily make the best climbing partners for a proposed route. This sounds cold blooded — it is.

Intuition shows its power in action, and

its force is sometimes diminished by the introduction of the rational. Intuition works best when it is simply trusted. The weather may be good, you may be feeling strong, you may even feel motivated and want the route, but if for some feeling or reason you don't want to go... don't go! The mountain is not going anywhere. As a climber it is essential that you seriously consider whatever conclusion, rational or irrational, that your intuition dictates.

Pushing your Psycho/Physical Edge into new levels of experience and expertise must be done with extreme care. If you are steady, in control, and aware of your position, you can "nudge" your Edge forward into new dimensions. The idea is to push your Psycho/Physical Edge in such a precise manner that you never step beyond it, while still forging ahead into new levels of experience. The moment you overstep your mental and physical capabilities is the moment you lose control. The line is very fine, and every time you step beyond your Psycho/Physical Edge you unnecessarily increase your likelihood of death or injury. Unfortunately, even with extreme care and psycho/physical evaluation, death and injury will continue to be a part of climbing. Objective hazards, human error, these are factors that can never be triumphed over.

If a partner takes a fall or is badly hurt, you may suddenly be in charge. If you have never been in this position it is difficult to know how you will react under such stress. If you have been through a case study of the scenario you will benefit from it. If you believe you will act well, if you envision yourself acting calmly and with precision, you will. Your body may rebel, but you must make those shaking hands work those ropes. There are no options. Your actions in these moments are critical. What if he stops breathing, right there beside you? The two of you just hanging from the ropes. He is lost. You are alone.

It would not be a time for sadness or anger. The door in your mind to these emotions must slam shut. You have work to do. It becomes your job to get yourself down while you still have the strength and capability to do so. This must be all that exists. There will be time for grief later. It is essential that you act automatically. Your systems of descent must be second nature. Your survival depends on your mental and physical capacity to deal with the situation.

Even now, four years later, I still pause and think of my parents picturing me in

battle, and of the summer that ended my naive days in the mountains; a summer where a friend's last breath was in my arms. If I had gone to Vietnam perhaps my parents would have sent me camouflage kit for my helmet, or fingerless gloves, maybe some photographs... and a letter from my brother. What could he say? A friend had been killed:

*...so life goes on and you have to feel all the pain until you become strong again. Never let go of what is important to you. Keep climbing. And Steve, use your judgement. Be careful.*

*Thinking of you always,  
Gerard*

## The Anatomy Of A Sport Climb

John Martin

Few people give much thought to how the routes they climb are established. After all, how hard can it be to put up a route? Surely you just throw a rope down, knock off a few loose flakes, whack in the bolts, et voila! — one sport climb ready to go, right? Maybe in your dreams, but not often on Rockies' limestone.

The first place you have to go before building a route is to the bank, because you're going to have to buy some equipment. The biggest item will be a cordless power drill, which will set you back about \$800 or more if you buy a good one, and that's without a spare battery pack. You can drill bolts by hand, but believe me, you don't want to if you don't have to. You'll also need Jumars or the equivalent. Then you'll need drill bits, bolts, hangers, and chain, not to mention a hefty hammer, a screwdriver (unless your hammer has a pick), a pry bar, wire brushes, a whisk broom, and maybe a garden trowel. A helmet is a must. Finally, you'll need a supply of old ropes and harnesses that you can afford to trash.

OK, let's say you've got your potential route picked out and you've got all your gear clanking around on your harness. Now it's time to get to the top of the climb. Sometimes this is easy, sometimes not. Maybe you can walk to the top, but maybe you have to bushwhack up and across steep, moss-covered, loose rock, or maybe you have to rap in from a higher level, having lost the landmarks you picked out from below. Never mind, eventually you'll get there — and it's bound to be easier next time.

Now for an anchor. With any luck there will be a big, solid tree somewhere directly

above the climb. If not - well, that's what bolts are for. So now you're all set to rap down the cliff and have a closer look at your prospective route. First, though, you'll have to clean off all the scree and loose rock, throw off that dead log and smash off these sharp edges with the hammer so you don't chop the rope later when you're dangling around on it.

Whew, nearly two hours gone already, but you're finally ready to tackle the real cleaning. This first bit doesn't look too bad, mostly just wire brushing off the lichen as far as that ledge. Too bad about the updraft blowing the lichen dust up into your face and back onto the holds. Oh well, it'll have to be brushed off again after drilling anyway. Hmm, the dirt on this ledge is filled with loose rocks. Guess it'll have to come off. Good thing you brought the trowel — you can fling most of the dirt clear of the cliff. Oops! The ledge is wiggling. Guess this block will have to come off. Good thing you brought the crowbar. Now there's more dirt to wire brush and sweep off and... damn! the next block down is loose too! When are those people below going to get out of the way so you can unload it?

OK, the ledge is finally clean. Let's drop down a bit and tackle this loose bit here. Hmm, there's more loose rock here than you thought, and it's only coming off in those little bits. What about those cracks underneath? Those bits underneath had better come off too and there's more dirt and there's that updraft again and you're swinging around under this overhang and you're too far off to one side and your harness is digging in and your foot has gone numb, and... are you having fun yet?

Finally it's time to work the moves. Enjoy it — this is the fun part. Next you'll have to decide where the bolts go. Would this section be better with two bolts or three? Which of these alternative sequences of moves should you protect? Right or left-hand clip? Can't go there, the rock sounds hollow. Too far over, you'll get rope drag. Too close to that edge. A short person will never be able to reach. You'll ground out if you blow that clip. And so on, until you can't figure it any better and it's time to actually place the bolts. Damn, what a nuisance to run out of power before all the holes are drilled. You'll have to come back again. Oh well, you wanted to clean off that one section better anyway. And, don't forget, you'll have to brush off the next route over. It's covered with dirt now.

So now that you're finished, how much did you spend for a 50 m route with an intermediate station? Let's see. A chained top anchor, \$7. An intermediate belay/rap anchor with rap hangers, \$11. Twenty bolts at \$3 each, \$60. A wire brush, \$3. Allowance for capital cost, interest and maintenance on the drill, say 50c per hole, \$12. Hmm, that adds up to \$93, not counting vehicle expenses. Good thing you bought in quantity to get the prices down! And you'll only have to cut about 5m off the rope where the sheath got damaged. What about the time investment? Well, if you don't count the driving and walk-in time on any of the three trips, couldn't have been more than — what, 15 hours?

Yeah, putting up those sport climbs — how hard can it be?

## Solo Free Climbing

### Panel Discussion — Banff Festival Of Mountain Films

*(Editor's note: Each year in November, the town of Banff is blessed with The Festival of Mountain Films, a collage of films, videos, slide presentations, discussions and arguments about the mountains and mountain sport. In recent years, Festival organizers have brought together panels of outdoor activists to consider a variety of mountain issues in a public forum. This opportunity to hear well-known members of our community express their views about the world we share is always a treasured part of the Festival, but*

*may be sadly unavailable to readers of the Journal who do not travel to the Festival. With this in mind, we've taken this space to transcribe recorded portions of a panel from the 1992 Festival, Solo Free Climbing, held on November 8. Some liberties have been taken in bringing the spoken word to the page).*

Panel Moderator: John Harlin, Editor, Summit Magazine Panel Members:

Barry Blanchard, Canmore mountain guide, with a long history of significant

Canadian and Himalayan ascents, several of them major solos;

Charlie Fowler, mountain guide from Telluride, Colorado, skilled in extreme rock, ice and alpine ascents around the world;

Robert Schemer, Austrian climber with several notable solo ascents, including Makalu, the world's fifth highest peak; and

Peter Croft, a Canadian now guiding in California, one of the world's most prolific extreme rock soloists.

The panel began with an introduction by

John Harlin which highlighted the contrast between the “glory side” of solo climbing, and the “brutal realities” so potentially inherent in this form of climbing. John pointed out that several of the year’s crop of films at the festival were about solo ascents, yet none of them spoke directly of the results of a mistake while soloing. He also spoke briefly of the myth of the “romance” of death in the mountain. In introducing this darker side of the game, John brought up the question of the self-centeredness, if not selfishness, of soloing, as a first provocation to the panel members. In concluding his opening remarks, however, John spoke of the fact that many of us seem to need to live extreme experiences directly, that we cannot learn from the experiences of others, and recognized that this may be one of the motivations for soloing, even in the face of the potential costs. The audience was then invited to address questions to panel members.

The first question asked the panel members to distinguish between actual versus perceived risks of soloing, and in particular to address the statistics of deaths from soloing:

Barry Blanchard: “I know more about the statistics from Europe, and it seems there, where more soloing is done, there are a lot of fatalities at the elite level. This may be because in Europe, as in the Rockies, the arena is different. As soon as you move away from the pure rock climbing environment and into the mountains, where you have avalanches, glaciation and weather to contend with, the game gets much more complicated. Many of the Europeans are pressured to make big, smash ascents, to get sponsorship, and to ‘live MTV,’ and sometimes they get smacked because of that.”

Robert Schauer: “I don’t know about the statistics, but it does seem to me that many more (people) are turning up soloing now, perhaps because of the pressure Barry mentioned. My own feelings about soloing have changed because I have lost so many friends soloing, and because I really enjoy having someone to give me company and share what I do. Whenever I have soloed — Makalu, for example — it has been because others have turned back, or have gotten ill. Then, I have gone on only when I have felt very confident, and I never continued if I had the feeling that something would happen to me. On Makalu, returning from the summit, when things got easier, I relaxed my concentration, and I took a 150 m fall

which stopped just 20 m short of séracs. This got me back to the impression that I do not want to be involved with soloing, but at the same time was an experience that really brought my climbing a step further — because when I was always thinking of safety, I never got deeper into the labyrinth which we all like to explore in a way. (After this experience), I felt almost as if I had been reborn again, and this is a very deep feeling that I might have never had if I had been along with someone else.”

Charlie Fowler: “The most serious things I have done in the mountains have always been with partners. In fact, we were talking before and agreed that the most serious form of climbing in the mountains is actually guiding, and not soloing.”

Peter Croft: “I think climbing with a partner adds many more variables. When you climb alone, you can control the situation a lot more. Statistically, I think soloing is actually safer.”

Charlie Fowler: “I know when I solo, I think of things more deeply, and harder than I do when I’m with a partner...”

Barry Blanchard: “My days soloing have very different objectives — usually to be on terrain that I’m in control on. On the flip side of that though..., sometimes I go out and I want to push, and see what I can do, and I’m not 100%. I’m not screaming and thinking I wished I’d loved my children more’, but it gets a little out of control. I wonder whether I’m out of line soloing like that, or whether the others have similar experiences...?”

Peter Croft: “It’s never black or white — you’re never 100 percent in control. It depends on what you perceive your rewards to be, and what you feel the risks are. If the rewards aren’t very great, then the risks aren’t worth it, and your balance will be off. But if I’m going on a big solo project, the psych that goes into it will be much greater than any roped project. Solo projects require soul searching.”

Question: You talk of control. How can you possibly be in control of objective danger?

Charlie Fowler: “You can solo something else...”

Barry Blanchard: “That’s the reason why I go into the ice climbing arena to solo here (in the Rockies). It’s a lot more predictable and secure.”

Robert Schauer: “It’s too easily said that roped climbing is safer. Lionel Terray, for example, was an incredible climber, and he died on easy ground, or Claudio

Barbier (the Belgian soloist), he died on easy ground — because whenever the difficulties are behind you, you relax, and your attention goes. Soloing keeps your attention high...”

Charlie Fowler: “Of course, some of the objective dangers are minimized by soloing, just because you go so fast.”

Question: “How do you feel about the example set by soloing — especially instructors soloing in front of students?”

Barry Blanchard: “I think it’s a realistic example, but one that needs to be put into the context of the experience of the person soloing. By explaining, for example, ‘I feel comfortable now, but you wouldn’t.’ And, after all, soloing is an important part of the sport.”

Charlie Fowler: “I’ve guided some routes, big mountain routes, where we didn’t take a rope..., and it seemed appropriate.”

Question: “How often is the solo you’re doing the first time you’ve done the route?”

Peter Croft: “...It depends. In some ways it defeats the purpose to go check out a route beforehand.”

Barry Blanchard: “Interestingly enough, my on-sight soloing usually happens in the largest, most dangerous arenas — the Himalaya and the Andes. There’s no way that I’m going to go there first with a partner and do the route and then come back and solo it. In those instances I’m going off and looking for something a lot different — I’m looking for a way into the labyrinth to try to figure out some stuff that’s going on inside of me.”

Charlie Fowler: “Most of the big solos I’ve done have been on-sight, whereas most of the smaller routes, I have done before.”

Question: “I’m not sure what’s wrong with soloing — it’s not like it’s a sin, yet people seem to think that doing it means that you’re crazy. In fact, what’s wrong with promoting soloing, because it might be a solution to some of the environmental concerns in the mountains”1.”

Charlie Fowler: “A solution to over-population, for example? Most people that think I’m crazy have 9-to-5 jobs, and I think they are crazy...”

Barry Blanchard: “Soloing is not for everyone, and not for anybody at all times, so it’s hard to promote it. And (after giving an example of friend who had died soloing when it was ‘inappropriate’) ego is such a dangerous thing when you’re up there, when you can die literally at the drop of a hat.”

Robert Schauer: "There are a lot of good soloists who are not known to the media, who do it just for themselves. Perhaps this is the 'best' kind of soloing; a kind that needs no promotion. This promotion is not always just up to the climber though — we need to talk of the media side as well, because they put a lot of weight on the idea of soloing."

Question: Could you speak about the state of mind while soloing versus climbing roped, — is that what allows you to be safe up there?

Peter Croft: "I think you can concentrate a lot more and get a rhythm which is pretty hard to get climbing with a partner, playing with protection. It is an awful lot different and that is important — if the mind space was the same, it would be dangerous. But I think a very important point of soloing is the difference between potential risk and actual risk — potentially, it's very risky, yet I think you can make it much less risky if you approach it in the right way. I think, for example, you could have a seminar on driving in rush hour — potentially that's pretty risky too."

Charlie Fowler: "When I'm out soloing, I get very focused. When I first started soloing, I was perhaps even too focused; I would forget to stop and rest. I used to get really tired. I've actually had to adapt my style."

Barry Blanchard: "I find that mind state very attractive; you just don't think about anything else, unlike the rest of the time when you have thoughts that perhaps don't really have any significance fluttering through your head. In soloing, you get beyond that and are just dealing with the rhythms of the environment and your self."

Question: Does that state of mind come before the climb, or do you achieve it once the climbing begins... ?

Barry Blanchard: "As I approach the climb, the layers of other things — my debts, my relationships — just fall away..."

Question: But aren't those other things sometimes the reason you solo... ?

Barry Blanchard: "Sometimes... yeah. It just makes more sense to me up there. Some times I find things down here just too confusing."

Peter Croft: "I don't ever do it because I'm depressed; I do it because I'm having a really good time."

Charlie Fowler: "I don't go to purge

Peter Croft: "Climb down."

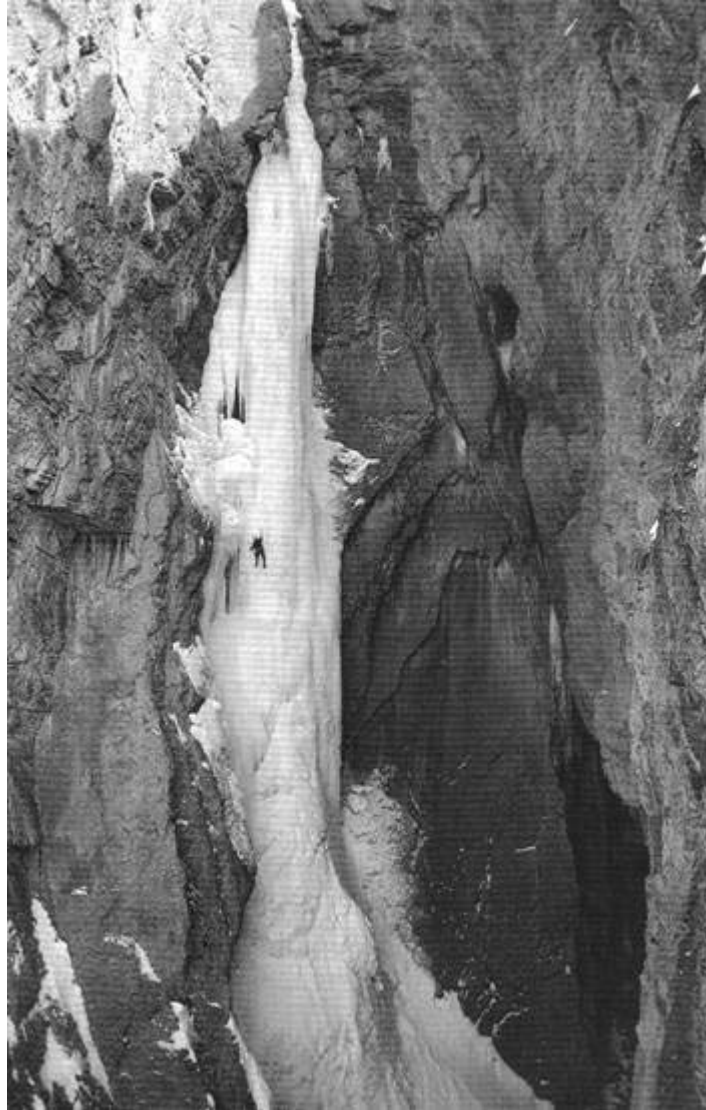
Charlie Fowler: "If I felt death was imminent, I'd stop soloing."

Peter Croft: "You have to learn where the line is; experience helps you to make the judgments about whether to go on or not."

Question: Don't you have to be comfortable with the idea of dying?

Peter Croft: "I just think it keeps you really honest. It takes you within yourself, and teaches you things about yourself."

John Harlin: "But I wonder whether people really do come to terms with the idea of death. I think part of my introduction was about people only dealing with these kinds of ideas in abstract terms. I think not everyone is so honest about death, or fewer people would be climbing."



Barry Blanchard soloing Whiteman's Falls, WI4. Photo: Pat Morrow.

myself. I go to have fun. Though, I have heard rumors that I go to purge myself, and I think that comes from people not understanding that you just want to go climbing. They have to make up some reasons. I think a lot of soloing gets done because, as Robert said, the original plans just didn't work out. That's the reason I soloed the Eiger."

Question: While you're climbing, is there ever a point where you lose that focus, and the fear subjugates you? What do you do then?

# Science and Safety

## Fall Factors For The Compleat Idiot

Jim Firstbrook

As climbers, we like to push our limits, to explore the envelope of our personal performance. This envelope is defined not only by the limits of our physical abilities, but also of our mental strengths. These mental strengths include the bravado and psychological conditioning to climb on the sharp end of the rope, but also the knowledge to minimize the inherent dangers of our sport. This article addresses one area of knowledge which can certainly reduce danger, but which is unfortunately misunderstood by many climbers: the fall factor.

Picture yourself about to climb the best finger-crack in the universe. It starts 1000 m up a vertical wall and is 160 m long. Through its entire length, it's completely parallel-sided, fitting only Friends of size 1-1/2. The walls on either side of the crack are featureless, so all the handholds and footholds for climbing, resting and gear placing are going to be in that crack. All you've got that will fit are 5 Friends of the appropriate size. Gazing up at the crack from the hanging belay, you have to make a plan about the best places to stop and place those five Friends.

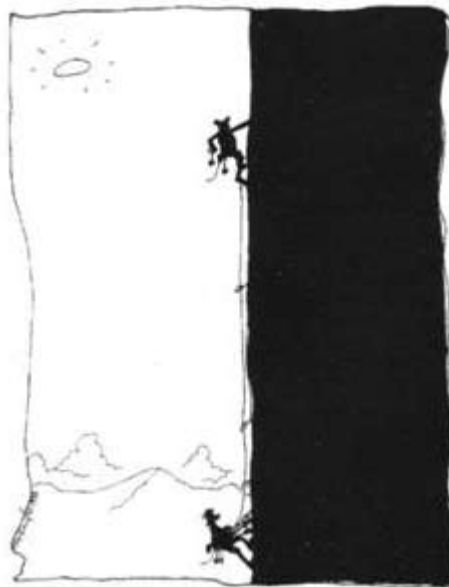
Some knowledge about physics is going to help you make the safest plan. "Physics? Wait a minute, this is the Canadian Alpine Journal. I want to read about John Clarke's latest encounter with devil's club in the Coast Range, or the new Rockies' winter horror climb. Physics is all that useless stuff I studied in school that bears no relation to my life." Perhaps, but, if you understand some simple ideas about the forces generated by falling bodies, then your protection plan for that crack is going to be all that much safer.

To really talk about the forces involved, we'll have to use mathematics. Sure, you may have failed Grade 10 math, and the very mention of the word sends spasms through your digestive system, but the math you'll need here is actually straightforward and will provide a much deeper understanding than you'll get just from words.

Before we look at impact forces generated

by falling climbers, there are some basic concepts we'll need. The first is gravity — remember Newton and his apple? Gravity is the force that causes unsupported objects, including climbers, to fall down towards the earth. All falling objects, regardless of size, accelerate towards the earth at the same rate: 10 m/s/s. That measure, "m/s/s," reads "metres per second per second." It means that, in the absence of air resistance, all objects increase in speed by 10 metres per second each second until something stops them.

The second concept you'll need to understand is mass — an object's mass is a measure of how much stuff it has. When mass is multiplied by the acceleration due to gravity you get weight. Weight is the force that gravity exerts on you (whether



Illustrated By Tami Knight

you are falling towards the ground, or are just using your legs to push back against it while you stand). Your mass is the same whether you're falling on the moon or on the earth, but your weight is substantially more on the earth where acceleration due to gravity is greater.

The next concept is energy — energy is a rather complex topic, so we'll confine ourselves to the kinds of energy that falling climbers have to worry about. The first of these is kinetic energy. Kinetic energy is the energy of motion: the faster you're going, the more energy you have. The next

type is potential energy. This is energy an object has because there is some distance it can fall. An object at the top of a 10m drop has potential energy. After it has fallen those 10 m, all of that potential energy has been turned into kinetic energy. If this falling object is a climber, there are now two possible paths for that energy: it can be turned into heat and noise and dissipated in the earth if he hits the ground, or it can be absorbed by the rope and the rest of his protection system. We'll ignore the case of hitting the ground for now, because everyone is already pretty familiar with the outcome of that possibility.

Now for the first of the math. An object's potential energy is given by the following equation:

$$E_p = MGH$$

That is, the potential energy is equal to the object's mass (M) times the acceleration due to gravity (G) times the distance the object can fall (H). That equation is pretty simple, really. You'll notice that if the object's mass increases, its potential energy increases. As the distance the object can fall increases, so does the potential energy.

When the protection system catches a falling climber, the rope acts like a long, stretchy spring. Springs can be described by some very simple equations. When you pull down on a spring, it stretches. The amount of stretch is proportional to the amount of pull: the greater the pull, the greater the stretch. Mathematically this is described by:

$$F = KX$$

where F is the force you're pulling with, X is the amount of stretch you get, and K is a constant known as the spring constant. The bigger K is, the more force you need to produce the same stretch (i.e., the "tighter" the spring is). When you pull down on a spring, you store energy in the spring. When you let go, that energy turns into kinetic energy as the spring rebounds to get rid of the stretch. The energy stored in the spring is described mathematically by:



$$E_s = KX^2$$

where  $E_s$  is the spring energy,  $K$  is the same spring constant, and  $X^2$  is the amount of stretch squared (multiplied by itself).

To describe a climbing rope mathematically as a spring is a bit tricky because the spring constant keeps changing depending how much rope "is played out" to the climber. For now, we'll assume that the spring constant changes evenly with the length of rope out. So, if we have a spring constant  $K_r$  (which is the constant for a unit length of rope), then for any given amount of rope  $Y$ , the spring constant is:

$$K = \frac{K_r}{Y}$$

This means that as  $Y$  gets larger (more rope out) our  $K$  gets smaller (the rope becomes more elastic). This is exactly what we all know from hanging on ropes.

Our next step is to take all these equations and figure out the impact force. The impact force is the force transferred to the falling climber and his climbing system (rope, protection, anchors, etc.) by the exchange of energy during the fall. We can calculate the impact force by imagining a falling climber with mass  $M$ , and  $Y$  amount of rope between him and his belayer. When the climber has fallen a distance  $H$ , the rope begins to catch him. The kinetic energy he has because he is falling rapidly through the air will now all be transferred to the springy rope. If you're into it, you can go ahead and crank the math to figure out what the impact force is, or you can simply trust me to have done it correctly. What we get is:

$$F_i = \sqrt{MGK_r Y}$$

This beast may look a little intimidating at first. What this equation says is that the impact force is equal to the square root of the climber's mass, times the acceleration of gravity, times the rope constant, times the ratio of the distance fallen to the amount of rope out. Now isn't the mathematical way of saying that less of a mouthful and more elegant?

Right now you're probably not impressed. I promised to help you figure out where to place protection on this hand crack of the

universe, and instead I've given you some mathematical gobbledygook. Consider then what this equation's really telling us. On any given day, your mass doesn't change much, the force of gravity is always constant and your rope's stretchiness is pretty much the same. So, if those things are all constant, then the only thing the impact force really depends on is the ratio of distance fallen to the amount of rope out. Intuitively, we might have expected it simply to depend on the distance fallen, and therein lies the misunderstanding of the principle that many climbers suffer.

This ratio described above is called the Fall Factor. Most of you have probably heard of Fall Factors before, and now, if you've understood the information above, you've learned the mechanics of how to



work with them. Our falling climber built up kinetic energy until the point the rope started to catch him, then that energy was transferred to the rope. The more rope out, the more spring there was to absorb that energy. The important thing to catch onto here is that it is the ratio of the distance fallen to the amount of rope out, not simply the distance fallen, which determines how much load the whole protection system has to hold.

Again, the Fall Factor is described as the ratio of the length of the fall over the amount of rope out. If you are 10 m out from your belayer and have a piece of protection 5 m below you, you fall 5 m to the pro plus 5 m past the pro for a total of 10 m, you are held by 10 m of rope, so your Fall Factor was  $10/10=1$ . If you are 20 m out from your belayer; your last piece was 10m below you,

you fall 20 m and are held on 20 m of rope so the fall factor is the same, even though your fall was twice as far.

This means that the highest impact forces come when the Fall Factor is the highest. The Fall Factor is highest when there is no protection placed and the climber falls directly onto the belay anchor (i.e., if you are 5 m from belay with no pro yet, you fall 10m are held on 5 m of rope). So, when you are 5 m or 50 m from the belay and you fall with no pro placed, you put the same maximum force on the protection system.

Obviously, this Fall Factor way of determining the falling climber's impact force ignores other considerations, such as ledges that might be hit along the way, or the energy (and skin) burned sliding down a lower-angled route. It also ignores impulse, which is the length of time the force is applied to the falling climber. We've also assumed that all of the climber's kinetic energy is stored in the rope, when in fact, some is lost to friction of the rope in the biners, some is lost to friction of air drag, some is absorbed by the belayer, and some is absorbed by knots tightening. Nevertheless, the principles here are still useful guidelines because they offer the most conservative approach to the situation of a potential fall.

What about that hand crack and Friends we have to protect it? Our protection scheme is best summed up by the maxim "protect early and often" or "keep the Fall Factor down." Get that first Friend in early, say 1.5 m above the belay; someplace close so you're sure you're not going to take that Fall Factor 2 fall onto the belay anchors. Then, if your next piece goes in 1.5 m above that, you'll have 3 m of rope out and a maximum fall of 3 m, for a maximum Fall Factor of 1. The next piece goes 3 m above that, 6 m from the belay, again for a max Fall Factor of  $6/6=1$ . And so on with the remaining two pieces at 12 and 25 m from the belay. Although it is going to be very scary placing that last piece at 25 m when you still have 25 m to reach the belay, if you popped off just at the belay before clipping, you'd still only have a Fall Factor of 1. Our general principle then is to place the first piece as close as possible to the belay, then place each successive piece



double the distance between the previous two. Worry more about the beginning of the pitch than about the end.

This scenario of the first clip close to the belay and each successive clip twice as far away applies equally well to the bolted sport routes. Those rap-bolted routes with clips equally spaced don't minimize falling forces—they need more at the bottom and could have less at the top.

That's not to suggest you go out and use a measuring tape to figure out where to put your pro. There are other considerations, no matter what the damn Fall Factor is such as: where the cruxes are, where the rests are for easy protection placement (or clipping), if there are dangerous places to fall (onto ledges, cactuses, etc.) and the psychological impact of getting a long way off your last piece. This is simply one more thing to consider; a consideration that will reduce the forces felt by your body, your gear and your belay anchors.

On one pitch routes and the first pitch of multi-pitch routes, you don't need to worry about Fall Factors greater than 1. All Fall Factors greater than 1 come from a fall where the climber ends up lower than the belayer. The ground gets in the way first on these climbs. Fortunately, the protection scheme to minimize the risk of cratering is the same as keeping the Fall Factor below 1, so we don't have to remember too many things.

Belaying is another place you can put these Fall Factor ideas to use. There is a wide range of devices and techniques available, each of which should be carefully evaluated to see what suits your particular circumstances. A general principle in the art of belaying is to look for the dynamic belay. A dynamic belay is a simple idea: rather than the belayer locking up tight so that no

rope is let out during the fall, rope is let out so that some energy is absorbed as heat, and so less energy needs to be absorbed by the rope. The dynamic belay can be used for any Fall Factor; by using up energy in the belay system, less energy needs to be dissipated in the protection system. The



belayer should tailor his holding force to the expected impact force. The flip side of this is that your belay shouldn't be too dynamic or you may not be able to stop the slippage once it gets started.

Some techniques and devices lend themselves more readily to a dynamic belay. The body belay is very dynamic, with some range in holding force, although in the case of a medium to high Fall Factor (greater than 0.5) the belayer will probably get burned and may lose control of the rope. The Italian Friction Hitch or Munter Hitch provides a range of braking modes (i.e., a range of holding forces); however, in the case of a high Fall Factor (greater than 1),

the rope may be damaged.

There are a lot of fancy bits of metal on the market, all advertised as belay devices. These provide a range of braking modes (rope back for static, and rope forward for dynamic). They become a problem in the case of a high Fall Factor, when they are generally too static and may produce very high forces on the rest of the system.

One device worthy of special mention is the Figure 8 descender, which works well in its intended use as a rappelling device, but can cause problems when used as a belay device. If you use a Figure 8 for belaying in the same configuration as used for rappelling, your belay will be very dynamic, and you may have troubles with anything but low Fall Factors. The Figure 8 used in the "sport climbing belay" mode has similar holding force. If you use it in the belay plate mode, it acts just like all the other belay plates described above. However, not all Figure 8s are designed to be used in the belay plate mode, so be sure the manufacturer has specifically designed it for that.

We began by talking about stretching our mental limits as climbers by learning some Fissix. How Fall Factors relate to protection schemes and belaying is just one place where physics can help improve your fun and safety. There's more to becoming a better climber than simply climbing higher and higher numbers.

## Ice Anchors

During the winter of 1990, University of Calgary outdoor pursuits instructor Murray Toft and I performed a series of comparative tests on a number of ice anchor systems. These included the electrical conduit set-up still popular at the time, and the relatively unknown "ice hourglass" (or "sandwich") invented by Russian engineer and climber Vitaly Abalakov. The results were published in *Explore Magazine* (No. 49, Winter 1990, page 41), *Climbing Magazine* (February/March 1991, page 100) and appeared in the *ACC National Newsletter* (Vol. 5, No. 3). In

the last two years I have seen a huge growth in the use of the "Abalakov Sandwich" — in fact, it has become so prevalent that I considered the use of conduit to be extinct.

However, the tragic death of Jasper Park Warden Pat Sheehan in December 1992 has led me to reconsider this belief. Pat fell rappelling when a single conduit anchor appeared to pull from the ice. In subsequent discussions I have realized:

- 1) not everyone reads *Climbing Magazine*;
- 2) most active climbers (but not all) are

at least vaguely aware of the ice hourglass anchor;

3) the need exists to create a more "permanent" journal record of the Abalakov system, that will hopefully be reviewed and studied more often than it would be in the dusty back issues of the outdoor mags; and,

4) a practical resurvey of the results from the first tests is in order to pass along a few observations from the last few seasons.

*Joe Josephson*

## Construction

The Abalakov Sandwich can be constructed on just about any ice surface, whether horizontal or vertical. In practice, steep ice pillars often offer prime locations where two holes can intersect behind an icicle, or series of icicles, allowing a maximum amount of displaced ice.

Begin by clearing any rotten or brittle ice away from the area. The ideal location is a wide, clear surface of smooth ice, as you find on top of many ice pitches. However, often all you need is a small section of "good" ice found between or underneath rotten plates or chandeliers. Beware of placing the anchor too close to rounded bulges for these tend to fracture hopelessly and will make for a frustrating time. Look either far back from the bulge or on steeper ice below.

Create a small starter hole as you would for most screw placements. Turn the first screw in at about sixty degrees off the perpendicular. The closer to perpendicular, the more ice you will displace and generally the stronger the anchor, however, don't make the angle too great, as this will create problems in attempting to intersect the second hole. The "game" is to try and make the holes as widely spaced and deep as possible. As the first screw goes in you may need to clear ice away from the side of the hole, but chip away as little as possible and try not to disturb the rest of the hourglass. After removing the screw you are now ready to drill the second hole.

Chip another starter hole roughly 20 cm away from the first. To line up the holes it may help to leave a screw sticking partially out of the first hole. Again at about 60°, start the second screw while eyeballing the horizontal axis to line up with the first. Once done, the resulting V-shaped hole is threaded with a rappel sling by using a length of soft wire or coat hanger to snare the end. This is then tied into a sling with a fisherman's knot.

## Results

Quite simply, the Abalakov, when properly done, is bomber. In soft, plastic ice with a 15 cm span the anchor failed at the average of 2250 pounds force. This compares to a maximum force one could exert on a free hanging dynamic rappel of around 800 pounds. When tested in brittle, cold ice the Abalakov never failed. Despite superficial hairline fractures between the holes, the new 7 mm sling we used would snap first at an average of 3250 pounds

force. In fact, we even broke one of Murray's carabiners.

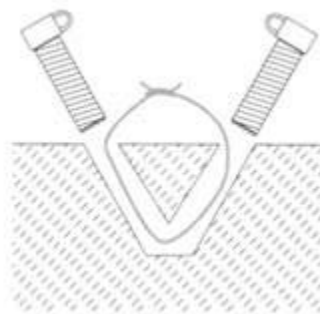
During the conduit test we used three configurations:

- 1) Single conduit;
- 2) Double conduit, side-by-side; and,
- 3) Double conduit with a vertical orientation.

I don't wish to elaborate on the conduit tests beyond the basic results for I strongly believe conduit's use to be obsolete.

Single conduit failed frighteningly at 900-to-1000 pounds force. This is ridiculously close to the rappel forces cited above. Both of the double conduit orientations produced acceptable results, failing between 2400 and 2500 pounds force. During the side-by-side tests both pieces failed simultaneously, while in the vertical scheme only one piece failed, and the rear conduit was unaffected and acted as a backup. During our tests, the 7 mm cord would generally break before the rear piece was affected. (This may be something to keep in mind when setting up the orientation of belay anchors on ice or rock). Perhaps the most interesting information gained was the fact that the ice never failed or deformed. It was always the conduit that started to bend or pull out of the ice, thus increasing the length of the lever arm and accelerating failure.

Abalakov Anchor cross-section from above



## Comments

The results suggest that both the Abalakov and conduit systems can work, but that the former has several inherent advantages, making it the preferred system. Considering the strength of all slings equal, the Abalakov earns its merit from the strength of the ice itself. Since our results suggest that it's the conduit that fails and not the ice, it is logical to deduce that relying on ice will be safer than relying on any man-made items. Furthermore, the Abalakov system is a multi-directional anchor, able to sustain a pull in any direction, whereas conduit setups are hopelessly one-

directional.

Abalakovs require nothing more than a few extra ounces of soft wire and extra sling; counter this with several pounds of conduit necessary for a multi-pitch route. Despite popular conviction, the Abalakov Sandwich is not slower to set than conduit; to safely place conduit you need to drill screw holes first anyways. After some practice, you should be spot on every time with the intersecting holes. In two years with over 60 routes I have yet to miss. On multi-pitch raps with good ice it is common to be fast enough to have the anchor set up before the second arrives.

In the original articles, Murray and I mentioned that a natural fiber like sisal could be used to provide a very environmentally friendly rap sling. Upon consideration, however, I don't see many climbers actually substituting sisal for the high tech super strong perlon cords and webbing. Nonetheless, even these perlon fibers are far more biodegradable than tubes of EMT conduit. I like to think of the hourglass as not only the green option but also the "considerate option." When the ice thaws, the left-over Abalakov slings give the local rats something to chew on!

## Observations

I have talked to several climbers who have used 5 mm cord to thread the Abalakov holes. They readily admit that this may be cutting it close. I regularly use 6 mm cord with no problems. For durability on more popular climbs one should use the minimum of 7 mm or better yet, sections of old 8 or 9 mm rope. The larger diameters are also easier to thread; being much stiffer, these ropes can be pushed through on their own. The lighter cords need to be pulled through with the wire.

Pre-cut your rap cords into one metre lengths with a hot knife or use a lighter to burn the ends. It can get difficult to thread a frayed end through the holes if the pieces are cut on-site, plus it will save you from using up your lengths of prussik cord which can be crucial in a rescue or setting up a belay.

Experiment with several types of wires and ways of hooking the sling. Many times, if the holes barely intersect, you can fudge the sling through by varying the shape of the hook on the end of the wire.

The new style Chouinard or Black Diamond screws are by far the best for making Abalakov Sandwiches. They are easily put in by hand and in soft ice are quick



to change the tilt if you notice that you're slightly out of line. On multi-pitch rappels a good system for getting off quickly is to let the same person go down first each time with the proper screws, wire, and cord. Use a short 17 cm Black Diamond screw for the anchor and backup. Use another longer 22 cm screw for setting up the Sandwich. Always back up the first person to use the anchor. (One way to ensure reliability from your partners is to have the one who sets up the anchor go last without the backup.)

In wet ice the holes will quickly fill up with water. They will need to be cleared in order to see what's going on as you thread. You can simply blow out the holes. Be sure to stand to the side of the subsequent geyser out of the opposite hole. Often times the ice will be very brittle and dry. To make it easier and reduce the amount of fracturing, better ice can generally be found several inches

down. To clear the ice an easy method is to whale a pound-in screw straight in as hard as you can. This will dinner plate the ice and make clearing quicker. Some climbers, myself included, have been known to thread the rappel rope directly through the holes. This usually makes the pull quite smooth. However, it greatly increases the chances of the rope freezing into the ice. Take care that the ice is totally dry and pull the rope immediately after rappelling. Use this method with extreme caution and judgement.

Before you go out and start slinging off overhanging pillars get to know this set up. Put some in at the base of a route or at a practice area. See how it goes and find out if you feel safe with it. Put one in and slowly chip away at the displaced ice. As you go, yank on the sling with a buddy, this will give you a good indication of its strength

and construction. One minus 30 day on Panther Falls I and two others chopped a Sandwich down to probably three cubic cms of displaced ice and could not break the thing.

If you are still unsure or are on a particularly scary rap, go ahead and put in two anchors at each station just as you might put in two screws. But most importantly, don't ever take any anchor system for granted. Only through experience, judgement, and constant observation can these anchors be safe. After doing several hundred of these anchors, I still do not place them automatically. Whether rappelling a Grade 3 or a Grade 6 horror, perfect ice or rotten ice, the same care, thought and evaluation must go into each anchor

## *The North*

### *Kluane National Park Reserve Climbing Summary—1992*

*Andrew Lawrence, Park  
Warden*

The 1992 climbing season in the St. Elias Mountains was characterized by generally poor weather during the spring. An Arctic low pressure system brought high winds, cold weather and more than average precipitation during March, April and May. This resulted in difficult climbing conditions and a low success rate. The remainder of the climbing season experienced fairly normal weather conditions.

In total, there were 30 groups and 186 people involved in mountaineering expeditions in the Icefields this year, resulting in 3147 person-days. Fifteen groups or 53 percent of groups attempting a peak were successful.

Sixteen of the thirty groups in the park this season attempted Mount Logan. Eight groups, involving forty-nine people, were successful in reaching either the East or the main summit. Fifty-two people were unsuccessful.

Two groups experienced difficulties and required helicopter assistance. Two climbers on the Hummingbird Ridge of Mount Logan became stranded due to equipment problems, and two climbers attempting a route east of McArthur Peak were injured by falling into a crevasse,

sustaining a fractured lower leg and a head injury.

Another attempt was made this year to determine the true height of Canada's highest mountain. Using state-of-the-art global positioning system (GPS) equipment, a joint Royal Canadian Geographical Society, Geological Survey of Canada and Canadian Parks Service expedition determined that Mount Logan is approximately 5959 m (19,545 feet) tall.

A first ascent was also accomplished. A group from the Winnipeg chapter of the Alpine Club of Canada managed to put five people on the top of Mount Manitoba, an 11,000 foot peak.

#### **Mountaineering Expeditions in the St. Elias Mountains — 1992**

##### *1. Mount St. Elias—Abruzzi Route*

John Baumann (leader), Dave McGivern and Leo Americus attempted a winter ascent of Mount St. Elias via the Abruzzi Route from the Newton Glacier between March 4 and March 23, 1992. Due to extreme snow accumulation the team was forced to retreat from the 11,000 foot point. (See following article for more complete description of this attempt.)

##### *2. Mount Steele — South Ridge and South East Ridge*

Andrew Lawrence (leader), Paul Langevin, Steve Dates, Mike Wynn and Chris Bradley attempted Mount Steele via the South and the South East Ridges from

April 7 to April 21, 1992. High winds, cold weather and acclimatization problems forced the team to retreat from the 13,500 foot point.

##### *3. Mount Kennedy — East Ridge*

Mike Fischesser (leader), Bill Proudman, Diana McAdams, Joe Lackey and Nej Mulla attempted the East Ridge of Mount Kennedy from April 28 to May 10, 1992. The team was unsuccessful due to bad weather and deep snow.

##### *4. Northern Traverse of Icefields and Mount Steele — East Ridge*

David Williams (leader), Betsy Fletcher, Peter Stone and Markus Kellerhals traversed the northern border of the St. Elias Icefields from the Donjeck River to McCarthy, Alaska, from May 9 to June 14, 1992. They successfully climbed the East Ridge of Mount Steele. (See article in this Journal).

##### *5. Mount Manitoba*

Peter Aitchison (leader), Tibor Bodi, Bob France, Richard Tilley, Pat Dillistone, Catherine Mitchell, Jeff Aitchison, Dennis Cunningham, Peter Muir, Rafael Munoz and Shane Petroff made two attempts at Mount Manitoba from the Prairie Glacier, May 8 to May 22, 1992. Five of the group were successful in reaching the summit.

**6. Mount Logan — King Trench**

Jason Edwards (leader), Mark Lepick, Kevin Slotterbeck and William Benz attempted Mount Logan via the King Trench Route from May 6 to May 18, 1992. High winds and bad weather made the team was unsuccessful.

**7. Mount Logan — King Trench**

Jonathan McKinney (leader), Bobby Dery, Tom Hafnor and Jim Chisholm attempted Mount Logan via the King Trench Route from May 10 to May 28, 1992. The team was unsuccessful due to bad weather and high winds.

**8. Mount Logan — King Trench**

Mike Marolt (leader), Roger Marolt, Steve Marolt, Jim Gile and John Callahan attempted Mount Logan via the King Trench Route from May 5 to May 23, 1992. Due to bad weather the team was only able to reach Prospector's Col at approximately 18,000 feet.

**9. Mount Logan — East Ridge**

Robert Tomich (leader), Bruce Kay, Grant Statham, Dan Canton, Doug Fox and Doug Dean attempted to climb the East Ridge of Mount Logan from May 14 to May 27, 1992. They managed to reach the 5000 meter point before descending.

**10. McArthur Peak South East Buttress**

Bruce Kay (leader), and Grant Statham made what

they believe is a first ascent of the South East Buttress on McArthur Peak during May 14 to May 24, 1992. They summited on an eastern sub-peak.

**11. Mount Logan — King Trench**

Mike Schmidt (leader), Lisel Currie, Sue Gould, Leo Nadeau, Charlie Roots, Roger Laurilla, Karl Nagy, J.C. Lavergne, Pat Morrow, Lloyd Freese, Rick Staley, Kevin McLaughlin and Al Bjorn, members of the "Royal Canadian Geographic Society - Logan 92 Expedition" to determine the true height of Mount Logan, attempted the King Trench Route of Mount Logan from May 10 to June 15, 1992. The team was successful in placing ten members on the summit.

**12. Mount Logan — Hummingbird Ridge**

Claudio Kerschbaumer (leader), Mauro Girardi, Paulo Ribiani and Nello Fontanella attempted a variation to the west of the Hummingbird Ridge on Mount Logan from May 14 to May 23, 1992. Two of the team managed to reach the 15,500 foot point before getting stranded, requiring helicopter assistance to descend.

**13. Mount Logan — King Trench**

Robert Chatfield (leader), Lama Ordway, Steve Portman and Charles Lay attempted the King Trench Route of Mount Logan from May 11 to May 21, 1992. Bad weather and sickness forced the team to descend after reaching approximately 16,000

feet.

**14. Mount Logan — East Ridge**

Peter Fredman (leader), Marten Kallstrom, Arne Melbin, Nils Morck, Nikolai Stensfors, Kent Nilsson, Craig Hollingcr and Doug Ash of the Swedish International Mount Logan Expedition attempted the East Ridge from May 17 to June 3, 1992. The team placed four members on the East Summit.

**15. Mount Logan — King Trench**

Steve Smaridge (leader), Trevor Petersen, Eric Pehota, Jia Condon and Rich Prohaska attempted the King Trench Route of Mount Logan from May 17 to June 6, 1992. Two climbers reached the top of Prospector's Peak. One made the main summit.

**16. Mount Logan — East Ridge**

Hugh McReynolds (leader), Fred Richie, Anthony Meier, Robin Janfield, Danny Denkowycz, Michael Friar, Michael Perkins, Joseph MaCauley, Jim Brown, Randy Huber, J.A. Oakes, K. Deroche and Mike Vattheuer of the Canadian Forces attempted Mount Logan via the East Ridge from May 17 to June 5, 1992. The team placed all 13 members on the East Summit.

**17. Mount Logan — King Trench**

Dwayne Congdon (leader), Neil Caldwell, Sue Kelsch

and Jacqueline Backhouse attempted Mount Logan via the King Trench Route from May 21 to June 6, 1992. One person was successful in reaching the main summit. Two made the West or Prospector's Peak.

**18. Mount Logan — King Trench**

John Halloran (leader), Bill Hoyt, Rob Michaels, John Watson, Paul Fotinos and Deane Morrison of the Merrimac Mountaineering Club attempted the King Trench Route on Mount Logan from May 24 to June 12, 1992. The team reached the main summit.

**19. Mount Logan — King Trench**

Jack Bennett (leader), Tom Bennett, Warren Grill, Jefferson Wagener, Jerrold Wagener, Dave Peterson, Greg Borges, Ihor Zalubniak and Mauro Conzatti attempted the King Trench Route from June 3 to June 26, 1992. All nine team members reached the main summit.

**20. South Arm Kaskawulsh Glacier**

Martyn Williams (leader), Hans Henn, Oliver Spies, Jason Brown, Frank Meyer and Andreas Boecker travelled on the South Arm of the Kaskawulsh Glacier from June 3 to June 6, 1992.

**21. Unnamed peak east of Mc Arthur Peak**

Jim Elzinga (leader), James Blench, Don Serl, Phil Whelan, Ron Van Leeuwen, Phil Schmitt and Glen Roane attempted a route east of McArthur Peak from June 6 to June 17, 1992.

	groups	successful groups	unsuccessful groups	climbers	successful climbers	unsuccessful climbers
Logan	16	8	8	101	49	52
Other peaks	12	7	5	72	39	33
Non-climbing	2			13		
Total	30	15	13	186	88	85

The expedition was cut short when two team members were injured in a fall into a crevasse while climbing. [When flying out of the mountain, the highly experienced Mr. Elzinga made the following, rather apropos, comment to the pilot, "These mountains are more Himalayan than the Himalaya."

## 22. Mount Logan— King Trench

Mark Sickles (leader), Stuart Ferguson, Fritz Winterstellar, John Skirving and Clint Lougheed attempted the King Trench Route from June 8 to June 26, 1992. The team was unsuccessful in its attempt to reach the summit, but managed to reach the plateau.

## 23. Mount Steele — Washburn/ Bates Route

Willy Horsman (leader), Steve Tyler, Bertrand Poinsonnet and James Larabee attempted the Washburn/Bates Route on the South West side of Mount Steele from June 8 to June 28, 1992. The team reached the summit.

## 24. Mount Logan — King Trench

Jim Sayler (leader), Larry Hartig, Dolly Lefever, Tom Bringham and Judith Terpstra attempted Mount Logan via the King Trench Route from June 7 to June 26, 1992. The team reached the main summit.

## 25. Servant, Hubbard, Logan and Kaskawulsh Glaciers

Dave Hik (leader), Sabine Schweiger, Eric Blake, Fritz Mueller, John Boulanger, Gerry Holdsworth and Diane Colwell travelled along the Seward, Hubbard, Logan and Kaskawulsh Glaciers for scientific research from June 17 to July 17, 1992.

## 26. Donjek Glacier

Roger Wallis (leader), Wally Joyce, Mark McDermott, Paul Geddes, Don Hamilton, Willa Harasym, Yan Huckendubler, Bill McKenzie, Gary Norton, Glynis Peters, Joe Piccininni, Robert Rick and Ted Rosen



East Ridge of Mount Logan. Photo: Craig Hollinger.

spent 15 days in the area of the upper Donjek Glacier. They made numerous ascents of the peaks in the area including Mounts Donjek and Badham and many other unnamed peaks from June 26 to July 10, 1992 (see article in this Journal).

## 27. Mount Queen Mary

John Owens (leader), Lauriann Owens, Gregory Davies, Ian Clarke, Dominic Williams, W.S. Hotten and John Westerman attempted to climb Mount Queen Mary from the north from July 3 to July 16, 1992. The team was unsuccessful.

## 28. Mount Hubbard

Peter Videler (leader), Imke Grijpma, Bart van der Meulen and Martine de Bruyne attempted Mount Hubbard via the Cathedral Glacier from July 4 to July 21, 1992. The team reached the main summit.

## 29. Stairway Glacier

Pierre Chanel (leader), Stewska Chanel, Francoise

Chanel, Erick Goudier, Francois de Montbeillard, Dominique Poujeaux and Bernard Rover spent some time in the Kaskawulsh Glacier and Stairway Glacier area from July 20 to August 12, 1992. They were successful in ascending an

## A Yukon-Alaskan Ramble

David E. Williams

We arrived at the airstrip on Kluane Lake on May 4, 1992. After speaking to and gaining advice from Andy Williams, we decided that we had little option but to approach Doug Makkonen of Trans North Turbo Air for placement of our food caches. Breakup this year was very late in coming, and over the next few days the weather deteriorated. On May 9, in a raging blizzard, we decided to leave our supplies with Doug in Haines Junction. Doug, when the weather cooperated, would come find us, pick one of us up and go place the food caches. This seemed not the best option requiring a break in the weather in the following five or six days.

However, we were at last off. Doug, with the help of his helicopter, did in fact locate us on the evening of the third day and, with Markus, our food caches were placed.

Wet snow was falling and a foot of new lay on the ground as we shouldered our packs. Leaving the Alaska Highway, we skied along a track into the bush that approximately paralleled the Donjek River for 10 to 15 km. The days that followed saw us sometimes skiing, sometimes sledding, sometimes walking, and other times wallowing along the Donjek River valley to the junction with Steele Creek. We skied up Steele Creek and onto the marginal moraines of the Steele Glacier. On May 14 we moved out onto the Steele Glacier and arrived at the base of the east ridge of Mount Steele. We reached our first food cache the following day (6-1/2 days in total). Six days later we stood on the summit of Mount Steele in magnificent surroundings. Mount Logan

unnamed 10,500 foot peak near the top of the Stairway Glacier.

## 30. Mount Logan — King Trench

Jim Ongena (leader), Carolyn Pollock, Bill Pollock, Parry Pollock, Fay Hjartarson, Ken Carpentier and Rob Buchanan attempted to climb the King Trench Route of Mount Logan from July 30 to August 18, 1992. Due to a lack of time and stormy weather the team was unsuccessful.

## Mount Fairweather, Northwest Ridge Allan Massin

Two years ago (May 1991) we spent 10 days ski touring from 3,000 feet on the Grand Plateau Glacier to 13,000 feet. We then climbed the Northwest Ridge to the summit at 15,300 feet and returned by the same route. The team included Steve Bertollo, Conrad Baumgartner and myself.

dominating to the south — my head retracing the steps of a past trip — we stood immersed in a mountain landscape.

After a day's rest back at base camp, it was off to the Hodgson Glacier. The following day, a climb up the Hodgson put us onto the Trapridge Glacier. A small tongue of glacier had recently surged, blocking our proposed route—sheer blue, groaning walls running down its length and across the terminus— forcing us to descend to the rubbly Hazard Glacier. From here, a gentle climb to the junction with the Wood Glacier followed by a marvelous descent, below the icy flanks of Mount Wood, lead us to the Brabazon Glacier. We skied west up the Brabazon until reaching the foot of a small broken glacier lying below and to the east of the Gemini Peaks. We ascended this glacier until it became a collapsing mass, spent a day storm-bound, and then we broke out into the high country once again via a snow gully. That afternoon we climbed both North and South Gemini Peaks. Finally, for a day at least, we were in the land of snow. The next day, May 30, we arrived at the Nesham Glacier and our second food cache. The following day saw us skiing down the Nesham to the junction with the Klutlan Glacier. Dall sheep on the slopes above, a bubbling brook, a brief, glorious meadow wander, then back to ice and rubble, we made our way west to Camp 23 below Crag Mountain. We ascended Crag Mountain and the next day enjoyed more ice skiing (in surroundings that can only describe the beginning of time), which led us to our third and final cache.

With ten day's food and supplies, we continued through séracs, wandering by blue turquoise pools, until we arrived at vast tracks of smooth glaciers that, if followed, would eventually lead to the base of

Mount Churchill or Mount Bear. We left the Klutlan by heading north via a small unnamed glacier and found ourselves, at last, at the head of the Russell Glacier. We climbed Peak 10,478 from here and then descended approximately 600 in. We were at last in a land of big, deep, safe snows (very much in contrast to the previous four weeks). We spent the next couple of days peak bagging. The first day saw us up both the 11,000 foot peak three miles south southeast of Mount Sulzer. Here you stand at the edge of two worlds—ice, snow, intense light and multitudes of metres below the grey White River Hood plains, and the relaxing green tinged Nutzotin Mountains sprawling in the distance. The following day, after a snowy start, Peter set off to reascend Peak 10,478 “for the views,” and Markus and I set out to climb Peak 10,400, a marvelous looking peak 11 or 12 km south of Mount Sulzer. We climbed the southeast ridge to the summit. The route consisted of switching back and forth from one side of the corniced and “haystacked” ridge to the other a short but breathtaking climb.

On June 9, with crazy carpet sleds in tow, we effortlessly glide the 18 km to the junction with the main branch of the Russell Glacier. From here, it was easy travelling, under the watchful presence of Castle Mountain, to Chitistone Pass with its heather, colour and smells. The following day dawned beautiful, and although we were very tired, we headed off and climbed Peaks 8590 and 8335, five km south of the pass.

After absorbing the views up the Russell, retracing our steps in our heads, we returned to our heathery camp for a relaxed afternoon in the sun.

June 11 saw us carrying our skis for all but 15 minutes of the day. The hike down from

Chitistone Pass to Chitistone Gorge was most definitely a highlight of the trip. Our senses responded to every colour, sound and smell (the stink of Dall sheep); this was a delightful day. The crossing of Falls and Toby creeks provided some intensity to the final day. An ice bridge just below the Chitistone Glacier made the crossing of the Chitistone River easy. However, just five minutes after we were all across, the old ice collapsed. Staring at one another, we all knew, this late in the season, we should have gone up onto the glacier and not taken the chance! We crossed the Toby just before our lunch of dry crackers and condiment scrapings. An hour or so later, we arrived at the Glacier Creek landing area. We sprawled and relaxed. Gary of McCarthy Air arrived early. By 6 p.m. on June 12 we were sucking on cantaloupe at the McCarthy General Store feeling — well, just feeling!

Trip members: Betsy Fletcher, Markus Kellerhals, Peter Stone, David E. Williams.

## *Mt. St. Elias Attempt*

*John Bauman*

On March 3, 1991, Leo Americus, Dave McGivern and I flew out of Yakutat, Alaska, with Gulf Air Taxi. The pilot, Mike Ivers, landed us at 7000 feet on the Upper Newton Glacier on the east side of Mount St. Elias. Wasting no time, we excavated a base camp snow cave and began to shuttle loads up the glacier.

We had read several accounts of earlier expeditions that attempted this route and these were fraught with stories of avalanches descending upon the Upper Newton Glacier. However, all of these previous climbs up to Russell Col were in springtime. We thought,

by climbing in winter and avoiding the large temperature fluctuations common in the spring, the freeze-thaw cycle through the course of the day would be less severe, and the avalanches created by the icefalls would be less frequent.

With this hope in mind, on March 6 our group trudged up the Newton Glacier and listened and watched as smaller avalanches cascaded down the eastern flank of Mount St. Elias. Although some of these spewed out onto the fringes of the glacier, none appeared to be massive enough to have reached our intended route up to the base of Mount Newton. But nearing the 3000-m elevation level, a sharp crack followed by a loud rumbling sound held us momentarily spellbound. A hanging glacier tucked up inside a narrow gully between Mount Newton and Russell Col had cut loose and was airborne. With a sickening feeling in our guts, we instinctively turned on our skis and raced down-glacier for our lives. It was a fair sprint before the blast cloud enveloped us. As we raced on, I kept waiting for snow to begin piling up behind me, but that event never occurred. The cloud settled. We were thoroughly shaken and the decision to abandon this route came quickly.

All of us had previously commented that the East Ridge of Mount St. Elias was really a nice line; now, it looked even better. That same day, we hauled loads back down the glacier, over to the East Ridge and up onto the ridge proper at 9700 feet. There was a feeling of relief that we were now on a much safer route.

The following day, we hauled another load up onto the ridge and established a snow cave camp at 10,500 feet. Up to this point, travelling weather had been good, but from this point on, one low pressure trough after another moved in and a series of incredibly bad storms



pinned us down. Ultimately, we shoveled a trail up to 11,000 feet, then turned around and shoveled our way back to base camp. In the period from March 8 to 22, eight days were full-fledged storm days, where climbing was impossible. These storms deposited over thirty feet of snow. Later, we found out that Yakutat experienced the wettest March in recorded history.

So much snow fell during a three day period at the 10,500-foot snow cave that we had to build two additional caves to keep above the snow level.



Hard shovelling! Photo: John Baumann

During the worst period of this 72 hours, we had to dig the snow cave entrance out every three hours around the clock. Each shovelling detail lasted up to two hours. First the cave door had to be cleared, then it was a ten foot dig, straight up to reach air. Next, we had to excavate a gigantic hole, not unlike an open pit mine with tiers. Each of us would man one tier and snow would be shoveled from one level to the next, then to the next, in order to clear enough snow for a three-hour reprieve. After this, the pit below would once again be full, and the cycle would begin again. It was a constant vigil that was psychologically and physically gruelling.

After this storm, we realized that it was folly to continue. It would take all our efforts just to return to base camp, and we still needed to retrieve a food and fuel cache at 11,000 feet for the return trip. It took over eight hours to shovel a 400 m trail to gain 150 m to retrieve the supplies.

On March 17, we reached the bergschrund where we had stashed the skis and sleds. The

whole area had changed, and despite finding one of the flags planted where we had crossed the bergschrund, six hours of digging and probing did not unearth the skis. It appeared that the massive amount of snowfall caused the bergschrund to collapse and bury the gear beneath tons of ice and snow for eternity.

The prospect of reaching base camp at 7000 feet looked grim. Without skis and with the massive amount of snow, progress was painfully slow. Taking turns, we would each lead out 50 m of rope while shoveling a trail. Each lead took half an hour, which translated into less than one kilometre's travel in eight hours.

Salvation came when Mike Ivers flew over to check on us. We told him over the radio that we needed snowshoes and avalanche probes. Later that day, he returned with an airdrop, and we were able to cover the two miles to base camp the following day. Sadly, the ten-foot cave markers were not visible. The winds had scoured and rearranged the snow into a wholly unidentifiable landscape.

We spent the remaining two hours of daylight digging a runway. The next day, we were up at 5 a.m. and spent another six hours leveling off the tops of

drifts and filling in the troughs, creating a 10-m wide, 200-m long runway for Mike to land on. We wanted to make certain that there would be no reason for the plane to abort a landing. Our trip was over.

In summary, the Upper Newton Glacier is an extremely dangerous place to travel. We left for the trip believing that we could control the situation by climbing in the dead of winter during the most stable time, yet we were wrong—nearly dead wrong! I've been on 25 climbs in Alaska and Canada, ten of which were winter ascents. I've never had to abandon a snow cave shelter and I have never lost a base camp. Both of these events occurred on the Mount St. Elias climb.

For an experienced group of climbers, losing a base camp is embarrassing, despite the severity of the conditions. Our mistake was complacency. After so many expeditions without incident, we fell short of planning for the worst case scenario. On a winter ascent of Mount Logan in 1986, an avalanche transceiver with an external battery pack was placed in the cave so we would be assured of relocating the base camp. In that instance, it had proven unnecessary, but on Mount St. Elias, this setup would have been the only way to relocate the camp. The rearrangement of the glacier due to the snow and wind was so extreme that we could not even find a 200 by 10m runway made just three weeks before, even though we searched with 6-m avalanche probes.

## *No Sweat In The Arctic*

*Larry Stanier*

I still remember first hearing about the Alaska Range in stories of the crowd scenes on the West Buttress of Denali and thinking smugly to myself,

“Sounds as bad as the Alps. I sure don’t ever want to go there, blah-blah-blah.” Since then I have heard more stories about crowds and circus acts on the Kahiltna Glacier, but I have

three-day tour of the Southeast Ridge of Mount Crosson. Funny, it was just like climbing a mountain back home; nothing hard, nothing scary, nice views, good snow, etc. Boring stuff.



Descending towards top of the couloir, SW Ridge of Mount Hunter. Photo: Dave Stark.

also seen a few good photos of the range and heard a few good stories. By the time Dave Stark asked me if I was interested in a trip to Alaska, I had seen a few great photos and the crowds didn’t seem to matter so much any more.

So Dave, Rodden McGowan, Martha McCallum and I ended up on the Kahiltna Glacier in early May ‘92 surrounded by Denali pilgrims of all shapes, sizes and strengths. We had only a few modest goals: staying alive, staying friends, having fun and not letting the crowds interfere with our enjoyment of this spectacular place. Being (with the exception of Dave) new to the neighbourhood, and given the fine weather, it seemed the right thing to climb a mountain and have a look around. We threw together a little gear, stepped off the West Buttress trail after a few hundred metres and had a lovely

How pleasant.

We rolled back into camp in time for more than one metre of new snow complete with many more pilgrims, big helicopters using our tent for reference, and a great scene of Cessnas trying unsuccessfully to ski powder. This quickly grew tiresome, so as soon as conditions mellowed, we picked up a hitchhiker and headed for the sunny side of Mount Hunter.

The clouds above 4000 m were impressive, really impressive. Huge layers of lenticulars sat on the peak of Hunter and covered most of Foraker and Denali. These kept us patient and humble for three days on the glacier below the Southwest Ridge of Mount Hunter. We all had a healthy respect for the weather here after what we had seen in the last week and so were not really interested in any extended camping antics up

high. When the winds finally lessened a little and the snow seemed about as good as we could hope for, we stumbled up a 750 m couloir with a nice bit of climbing at the top and set up home on a small col. Home was surrounded by monstrous snow fortifications, and retreat was high on the list of options, especially given the sound of the wind on our route.

Early next morning things had calmed to a dull roar, so Martha and I set off with the others hot on our tail to try and crank a day trip out of the rest of Mount Hunter. The weather smiled on our foolish boldness and conditions became downright pleasant before too long. We made pretty good time on the initial ridge, followed by a couple of nice mixed pitches, and then ten or so really high quality, nicely exposed, 40° to 60° ice ridge pitches with the occasional steep bit thrown in to keep us honest. It was cold, clear and calm with big views in all directions and it definitely felt like we were up high in the mountains. Once off the ridge, it was just fancy glacier travel to the southwest summit and Martha and I were quite content to sit there and watch Dave, Rod and Adrian do the right thing and slog to the true south summit. Twenty-two hours after breakfast, we were all whipped, but safely back at camp.

After this fine mountain wilderness experience, we retreated to the airstrip once again for a rest and air-delivered hot pizza and cold beer. Pathetic, yes, I agree, but it’s a hard life in the mountains and we all try to deal with it as best we can.

Dave and Martha had run out of time, so Rod and I roared off with big plans to rush Mount Foraker. Foraker was not interested in our plans. For many reasons, the mountain had a very bad feel to it, so I talked Rod into a retreat. He was willing to carry on, but was

also wise enough to let the most conservative vote win. We did stop for a quiet smoke with the ghosts of Danny Guthrie and Ian Bolt before leaving. That was nice — I still miss those guys sometimes.

We still had time and energy for one more project, so after helping Dave Scott and Rowan Harper celebrate their success on the Cassin, we took Rowan’s advice — “yeah, best route in the range, man, mega-classic, blah-blah-blah” — and packed for the West Face of Peak 12,380. It is a lovely peak on the ridge between Hunter and Huntington and only a couple of hours’ ski up-glacier from the airstrip. That evening, we headed out to do it as another long day trip. I guess you could say we redpointed the route, though we weren’t sure what route we were on until it was almost over. The whole face was covered in fog, but after waiting a while, we started following our noses more or less in the general direction of the summit. Belay across the “schrund, a few hundred metres easy snow and ice, rope back on, mixed ground, a steep knife edge, a pitch of 80° ice, more snow, more steep ice and then miles of ice gullies and mixed ground to the summit. Great fun! For a while, I got quite unreasonably grumpy from being low on food and a brutal cough I couldn’t quite shake. I will always be grateful to Rod for putting up with me without complaining, like a good friend, ‘til I got my act together again.

That was Alaska as I saw it. Flying out, we caught a glimpse of Broken Tooth and the Mooses Tooth; they are now high on my wish list. The routes on the north side of Foraker have a certain attraction, and the Cassin really is a fine line. I almost hate to eat my words completely, but I might even prostitute myself in the future and join the queue as a guide on the West Buttress Denali. Boy, if this keeps up I

might even stoop to climbing the Alps one day.

(P.S. The seed for this story was hatched last fall while waiting out the weather in a little town called Chamonix. I guess I stooped...)

## ***Donjek '92 — Or The Great Orange Success***

*Roger Wallis*

The great orange success, being the Toronto Section's 1992 trip to the St. Elias Mountains in the Yukon's Kluane National Park.

How did it go? The early team, seven of us, bought, begged, or borrowed gear, food, lumber, and propane in Whitehorse and transported 1800 kg of it to the airstrip at Kluane Lake. We then flew into the Donjek Glacier and within 40 hours had built our base camp (the Mark 1 version) and completed a first ascent of an unclimbed peak.

The late team (the other six), never had a chance to see Whitehorse. When they got off the jet from Vancouver, they were immediately nabbed by Wally Joyce Transport Inc., driven 250 km to Silver City, were shunted into the heliocourier, flown 80 km into the St. Elias mountains, and landed on the glacier at 2800 m. All this took just 4 hours from Whitehorse, and only 18 hours from Toronto. They looked a little stunned!

In total, we flew 9 inward flights (2.5 tons) and 7 outward flights, more or less to the day and the hour that had been planned eight months before! The only real exception was Ted and Glynis's initial flight which flew round and round the upper Kaskawulsh Glacier, failed to land, and returned to Silver City, thus abandoning Yan and Roger on the Donjek with only half of their tent poles and foamies, and without a fuel bottle for the MSR stove for

their initial -20°C night on the glacier!

Base camp had a superb view of Mounts Steele and Walsh in front and Donjek Mountain behind, and was provided with a gentle down-glacier breeze to ameliorate the heat of the afternoon. Its situation allowed us to head off each day in a wide variety of directions.

All 13 participants were involved in numerous climbs: the aged, the unfit, the unwell and even Team Video. Between us we climbed 17 "peaks." Fourteen were first ascents of the particular mountain and the other three peaks were climbed by new routes. The first ascents of Peak 3660, Peak 3658 (two different routes), and Peak 3580, and the new routes up Mount Badham and Donjek Mountain, all involved over 600 m of fine alpine climbing on substantial peaks.

Bill's 10-minute solo descent of the 600 m ice slope on Peak 3395 was noteworthy, especially to those watching at the bottom, where it looked like one long fall. Willa's self-induced 200-m long snowslide on Peak 3400 remained an impressive testament to the instability of wet snow on ice.

Four masochists went on a 33-km circle ski trip. They timed this so that it involved 15 km of continuous uphill skiing to gain 1000 m of elevation during the heat and wet snow of the afternoon. Their body language on their return to camp failed to inspire others to repeat the trip.

The ultimate ski descent was by Paul from the very summit of Peak 3530. The previous day, Roger and Don had spent 3 hours kicking steps in crampons to even reach the top.

Throughout the 16 days of our stay, the weather was perfect. You could stretch out a hand and seemingly touch the giants of the St. Elias — Mounts Logan, Vancouver, Lucania and Steele; and almost 100 km to the

southeast Kennedy, Alverstone, Hubbard were usually clearly visible. We even saw Mounts Bona and Bear 120 km to the northeast.

Precipitation through the 16 days totaled an amazing 0.1 mm of snow. Night temperatures of -5° to -20°C ensured great ski/climbing conditions on well-frozen snow in the early morning. By the afternoon the temperature climbed to +20°C to produce more than 200 litres of water a day running off the black plastic sheets.

Every night gourmet suppers were created by Joe Peach, Glynis and Bill from our never-ending supply of fresh meat, vegetables and fruit. Which brings us to: the "orange problem." By a slight oversight, instead of buying 200 oranges, we bought 200 pounds, and thus flew a complete planeload of oranges to camp! At five oranges per person per day, we made a major effort to prevent the onset of scurvy. Oranges were served 24 hours a day to accompany any and every meal.

The Troika's (Peach, Rob, Mark) tent and its multi-purpose extensions passeth all understanding (and weight restrictions) as did their "toys," e.g., fly-fishing on a glacier; warm showers; solar panels for batteries for their CD players, and, of course, the video recorder.

In fact, the Troika's video production became the all-consuming passion, e.g., Rob's deliberately falling into a crevasse; persuading Bill to ski over bergschrunds; having ladies towed round base camp in sleds, etc.; never mind the nightly "leader's report" from "Ristian Wallington." The current price to buy all known copies of this video (in order to prevent public showing) is now more than the cost of the trip!

Eventually, all good things come to an end, even if tears were spilled when we left one day early (an authoritarian decision based on sound intuition), as the good weather broke the next day and the St. Elias remained completely unflyable for the following seven days.

The only participant so far not mentioned is Gary because he wishes to remain anonymous. In conclusion, once again the "M and Ms" (the mature and mediocre) prove that you can have a really enjoyable climbing holiday in Canada's greatest mountain range!

## ***Swedish Mount Logan Expedition***

*Craig Hollinger*

On June 1, 1992, four members of the Swedish International Mt. Logan Expedition reached the summit of the East Peak of



Mount Logan, East Ridge. Photo: Craig Hollinger.

Mount Logan. The climbers, Peter Fredman (expedition leader), Marten Kallstrom, Nils Morck all of Sweden) and Craig Hollinger (of Vancouver) were welcomed to the top by the thirteen member Canadian Armed Forces team which had summited only minutes earlier. The remaining four members, Arne Melbin and Kent Nilsson of Sweden, Nikolai Stenfors of Finland, and Doug Ash of Lions Bay, had packed up part of Camp 9 and moved it down to Camp 6 at 4100 m. The summit party joined them later in the evening. By June 3 the team was back at Kluane Lake.

The climb was organized both in Sweden and Vancouver during the winter of 1991-92. Peter Fredman and Craig Hollinger met through the Varsity Outdoor Club at the University of British Columbia in 1990, and over many months, numerous letters, faxes, and telephone calls flashed across the Atlantic as the expedition took shape. Food for eight people for 31 days was organized in Vancouver, and divided into two portions. Twenty one days were packaged into daily food bags, and the remaining 10 days were packed in boxes to be left at the landing site on the Hubbard Glacier. A expedition to Mount Logan is considered in Sweden to be a sizeable undertaking, so the Swedish members were able to acquire some sponsorship. About a quarter of the food and the tents were supplied free or at low cost to the expedition.

The team arrived at Kluane Lake on May 12 and spent the next five days waiting for weather and for the backlog of climbers to clear. By early afternoon on May 17 all eight members of the expedition were deposited on the Hubbard Glacier by Andy Williams's expert flying. Camp 1 was made that evening at the foot of the East Ridge after an exhausting 6-km ski in. The next six days of near perfect weather allowed

the expedition to move-up through five camps to Camp 6 at 4100 m. All camps were built on large snow mushrooms big enough to hold an army. (In fact they did: the Canadian Armed Forces expedition often shared the campsites!) Camp 6 occupied a partially filled-in crevasse for the next four stormy days and nights. On May 27, the storm eased up enough for the expedition to move, and Camp 7 was moved to an exposed, windy ledge at 4600 m on the ridge. The next day, the last of the ridge was climbed and the camp moved to 4850 m on the summit plateau. The day after, May 29, the final high camp, Camp 9, was made at 5250 m just below the East Summit. The weather on this day was clear, calm and cold (-30° C). The next day was just as calm and even colder, yet ideal for a bid for the summit 7 km away. After a long, drawn-out getting-ready process, (it was damn cold that morning!) all members of the expedition pushed off for the summit. An unseen storm, brewing all day on the other side of the mountain, eventually forced us back to the safety of the tents. We had come very close, reaching the gap between the East Summit and the main summit before being blown back in the face of the storm. May 31 was spent in the tents waiting out the storm. On June 1, the decision was made to climb the East Summit and then go home. The strain of the climb was showing in the resolve of the climbers, and only four decided that they had enough left to attempt the East Summit. The remaining climbers packed up their part of the camp and started down.

Summary: An expedition composed of five Swedish, one Finnish, and two Canadian climbers attempted a climb of the main summit of Mount Logan via the East Ridge. The climbers were on the mountain from May 17 to June 3, 1992

and placed nine camps at 2400 m, 2500 m, 3120 m, 3300 m, 3580 m, 4100 m, 4600 m, 4850 m, and 5250 m. Four members of the expedition reached the summit of the East peak on June 1. This was an exceptional snow year, so the route was mostly on snow with only a few short rock sections lower down.

## *Across The Wrangell Mountains*

*Allan Massin*

From Gakona, Alaska, our pilot brought the three members of our team to 7,500 feet on the Nabesna Glacier. Our goal was to climb the Northwest Ridge of Mount Blackburn (16,390 feet), then traverse the Wrangell Mountains.

We left a cache at the landing site and began skiing towards our objective. At 10,500 feet we were hit by our first storm. The following morning it cleared, allowing us to advance slowly towards the ridge in knee-deep snow. Caching skis on the ridge, we found ideal climbing conditions, yet not long after a shovel was required to advance at all. At 11,500 feet, we were hit by a second, massive, storm during which the tents were continuously buried. At 3 a.m. we started digging a cave, and

for two days the storm did not let up. As our planned route was clearly no longer feasible, we began the descent across unstable slopes.

Back at base camp, we were hit by yet another storm. Our plan was then to ski tour 60 km east and then south to the closest town, the old Kennicott Mine, but first, we had to travel around Rime Peak and Atna Peak through Mountaineer's Pass. Just short of the pass we were hit by another fierce windstorm and we dug in again.

The following day, at the pass, we had a fine view of the volcanically active Mount Wrangell and of Mount Sanford.

Travelling south below Parka Peak we were stuck in another two-day storm near Peak 10,365. Hip-deep snow the following day slowed us down yet again. Still, that evening, I managed to get in a beautiful run. In order to get to the Kennicott Glacier, the best descent was down the west face of Peak 10,365.

With the new snow, we found safer travel in the icefall to the south. Intricate icefall route-finding with one rappel left us with one slope to cross. Safely camped on the south side of the Wrangell St. Elias, we were treated to northern lights that seemed to touch the tents.



Descending Upper Kennicott Glacier. Photo: Jan Neuspiel.



To reach the Kennicott Glacier, we travelled just south of Packsaddle Island. At this collision point of three glaciers, we experienced the most spectacularly crevassed

icefall. Touring through the area involved route finding which took the entire afternoon. After one 6-m crevasse fall, we felt we could no longer find reliable bridges, so we opted

for travelling in the bottom of the crevasses until we finally emerged on the Kennicott. One day of fine skiing brought us to our lost camp on a moraine which gave us fine views of

the Chugach Mountains. Our trip ended in the wild towns of Kennicott and McCarthy, Alaska. The team members were: Steve Bartollo, Jan Neuspiel, and myself.

## The Coast

### A Coastal Pair

John Clarke

Skowquiltz — Sutslem  
— Kitlope — Kimsquit  
Traverse

May 5 — Playtime! We were in the “nylon hotel,” camped on a rotten abandoned dock in Bella Coola listening to the rain and dreaming about our morning Beaver flight into Skowquiltz Bay in Dean Channel. Shirley Rempel, Dave Lammers and I had driven to Bella Coola to ski the snowy divide between the Skowquiltz and Sutslem Rivers in the Kitimat Ranges of coastal British Columbia. Rain, wind, waves, and a high tide shook the tents around on the old decking. Next day, a Wilderness Airlines Beaver landed us near the mouth of the still pristine Skowquiltz River: low tide, calm water and ducks. Jumping off the pontoons we landed on wet seaweed and clawed our way up the wet rocks. We waved the pilot goodbye, watched the Beaver take off and settled into our new remote coastal home. There were no boats anywhere



“B.C.ing” across a Kitlope stream. Photo: J. Clarke

and the only sound was the whine of ducks flapping their wings.

Entering the forest, we saw big stumps in among the second growth from the days when hand loggers pulled float camps along the water’s edge and cut what was in easy reach of the inlets. Beyond that, a well-defined ridge crest took us to an alpine lake at 2000 feet. Meadows and tarns dotted the little plateau and two loons didn’t seem to mind our very quick swim in the chilly water. At 4000 feet we broke out into the open with sweeping views of Dean Channel and snowy ranges beyond. The heathery campsite that night was at the first of the airdrops we had placed along the intended route. After only one day of travel along the divide, a three day snowstorm began. Dave whiled away the days playing computer chess and Shirley and I shoved our faces into cheap paperbacks. Shirley loved the heavy bread we brought (and food in general, come to think of it) and one evening when I boiled up a very glue-like spaghetti my hungry victims

ate it anyway. An afternoon ritual during the storm was for the three of us to ski up the ridge and marvel at the snowy ranges, the clouds, fleeting bits of sun on distant glaciers and the deep green Skowquiltz valley beneath. Our immediate environment was a fairy tale collection

of round rime-plastered rock islands with gnarled stunted trees hugging their sides. We drew pictures in the snow with our ski poles and always seemed to get back to the tent just in time for wind and lashing snow to resume.

On May 11, in clearing weather, we had a dreamy day skiing along the divide between the Sutslem and the big eastern tributary of the Skowquiltz. Our camp that night was down on the 4200-foot col surrounded by grand ice scenery framed in a blue sky. In the morning, on the long climb up toward the 7455-foot Sutslem Peak, Shirley was whipped right off her feet in the wind while carrying her skis over one of the short rocky steps on the ridge. Later the tents were pitched at 5800 feet on the southwest ridge of Sutslem Peak.

In the evening Shirley and I climbed Sutslem by skiing counterclockwise around the peak and hiking up the final snowslope just in time for the magic evening light.

Skiing north the next day, the sky was dark blue, but the wind was ridiculous and there was no shelter anywhere. We could barely manage to eat our bread and cheese crouched behind the packs. Late in the evening we skied up to the food boxes of the second air drop on a 4900 - foot snowy knoll above the extreme source of the Skowquiltz River. When I arrived, the first thing I saw was wolverine tracks coming straight from the 4 m bamboo pole used to mark the location of the food cache. I dashed up to have a look — and could not believe it! The animal had

walked within 5 m of the food boxes and did not even walk over for a sniff! We had “catch of the day” with macaroni and cheese and then sleep.

Lazy morning. We lolled around after our strenuous day yesterday taking our time doing everything. In the afternoon Shirley and I said goodbye to Dave, packed up and left for a three day side trip to the 7500-foot peak to the west. Dave yelled after us: “What do I do if a wolverine comes when you’re gone?” “Just don’t give him any food,” we said. The answer came back: “I’ll give him anything hewants!”

From the 7500-foot peak we saw the great dark corridor of the Kitlope Valley cutting through ranges overwhelmed with snow. It was a rare privilege to look into a valley this size which is still pristine — in fact, it has been established to be the largest unlogged temperate rainforest valley left in the world. We stood on the summit completely absorbed by the landscape and there were no clouds. From this one spot, we saw the sun glinting on the open ocean, turned around and saw the interior plateau to the east. Happy day!

Dave was thrilled to see us when we arrived as he was starting to get a bit lonely. He was explaining to us how at home he always feels that he should be doing something. “But out here I can do absolutely nothing for three days and not feel a bit guilty.”

In the morning we decided, “Today we are not going anywhere.” A total day off was declared — and in clear weather! This was not a high-

ball party! After porridge, Dave came over from his tent, showed Shirley how to play chess, then made jello and set it out in the snow to set. We made toasted cheese sandwiches for lunch followed by the jello for dessert. Someone remarked on how 'busy' we were and this was supposed to be a day off! Shirley sewed new loops on the tips of her skins, followed by reading and snoozing while the perfectly blue day wore on. Flecks of cirrus came and went but the marvellous weather remained. No planes even went over us and with no wind it was very quiet.

Next day we skied north down a gentle ridge between the two main branches of an unnamed Kitlope tributary, making linked turns in perfect snow. After skiing over a gentle dome we had another run down smooth slopes and into the trees where the skis were left on while crossing the boggy interruptions in the snow. The creek was crossed on a log, followed by a quick wash in the freezing water. Camp was in the friendly forest and dinner was eaten around a warm fire.

We got the fire going again in the morning and enjoyed the sun in a nearby meadow, whose ponds reflected the snowy ridges above. We packed up, hiked through woods and boulders up the valley to the north. In the open, skis were put on again for the long march up to the col above the head of Cornice Creek where our last airdrop was found in good condition. The next day was a big event. We were going to Mount Kapella, a name we put on the peak since it is at the head of the Kapella River. We got up early — for us — and started up in wind and cold.

Our new definition of an alpine start — "You're in the alpine, and you're starting!" Frozen snow, fabulous views and easy climbing all the way — the perfect Coast Range

ski peak. The summit had an impressive display of cornices and rime, along with more grand glimpses into the Kitlope Valley and extensive views of our route from the previous week.

On the 21st we laid around all day. Dave was wondering aloud whether the unwashed human body only gets so dirty or "does your nose just give up?" It was later on the walk home down Cornice Creek that we all agreed that, yes — the body does get dirtier and dirtier! We stayed burrowed in the bags listening to ptarmigans near the tent and the hooting of grouse down in Cornice Creek. Next morning a high grey canopy didn't discourage us from skiing north in flat light up a long easy ridge to the 7400-foot peak west of Cornice Creek. A powerful cold wind from the east brought the odd snowflake and the peaks south of us were disappearing. Stashing the skis, we hurried up the final 300 m before our peak was lost in cloud. We were lucky. Since the storm never came, we had a chance to look down Cornice Creek, our exit valley and scope the route to the 7400-foot peak 7 km north of Mt. Kapella.

Leaving a food cache on the col at the head of Cornice Creek, we spent 5 days trying to reach the peak north of Mt. Kapella. Our base camp was at the snout of the glacier at the extreme source of the Kapella River. It was an idyllic little holiday but the weather foiled two separate attempts on the peak. Back at the food cache, we discovered

that a wolverine had helped himself to all the food and our walkout down Cornice Creek was a hungry affair. The zippers on my tent had packed it in and my thermarest was becoming the subject of many jokes as it had broken out in boils! It was dying a horrible death (after many seasons) as the outside skin came unglued from the foam. Shirley and Dave were wondering when the whole thing would go and I'd wake up perched on a giant sausage roll. There was much talk about having baths in the freezing tributaries. Just talk though. For our three day walk down to the Kimsquit River we had some jello powder, two power bars, instant mashed potato flakes



John Clarke nears summit of Mt Morin

and a small amount of beef soup stock powder. The jello was for breakfast and the rationed pieces of power bar were for lunch. For supper the potato flakes and soup powder produced beige mashed potatoes. In the bush, the skis were lashed together to be carried like a suitcase and over busy sections they were thrown or pushed ahead into the foliage. In the logging camp at the mouth of the Kimsquit River we made spectacles of ourselves in the cookhouse.

**Kitsumkalum** —  
**Ishkheenickh** —  
**Khutzeymateen** —  
**Exchamsiks** — **Exstew**  
**Traverse**

This trip had been a big dream for me. Two years ago, a heavy bout of winter map-gazing resulted in an obsession

with the glaciated ranges northwest of Terrace, B.C. Half a dozen rivers drain radially from the central core of the range making its appearance on the map a mountaineers' dream. In 1991, in an attempt to circle the Exstew River with John Baldwin, the weather allowed us only to cover the ranges east of the Exstew and we were unable to reach the central cluster of peaks at the source of this river.

For the 1992 trip I decided, because of the length of the traverse, the number of peaks, the usual desperate weather and the slow pace I prefer, I would allow for 45 days' food. This meant six helicopter-placed airdrops with 7 days' food in each and 3 days' food in our packs when we left the logging road.

On July 3, I finally left Vancouver on the bus to Smithers after many weeks of running around like a gerbil, packing food, fixing gear and just getting all the details done. The bus from hell; recycled air. Pulling into Smithers at 4:11 a.m., I was incoherent for lack of oxygen and glad to see Steve Sheffield, my partner for the traverse. Later, in a hotel room in Terrace we put 2 kg of cayenne and an equal amount of laundry soap powder in a bowl, added water and stirred. The resulting dough was plastered on the airdrop containers to keep wolves, wolverines and grizzlies away from the food caches. On July 5th, the airdrops were placed along the proposed route and Steve and I began plodding up the logging road in the north branch of Mayo Creek. After a day of easy slide alder and moraine we plunked the tent down on the 4200-foot flat glacier bench southwest of Mount Conroy. We'd arrived in the land of the Kitsumkalum. For the first 8 days of the trip, Steve was sick from a bug he got in South America — which meant our paces were perfectly matched! We hiked down the

divide east of Bohler Creek, dropped to the glacier snout at its head and joined up with the route where John Baldwin and I had left off. We spent a couple of rainy days in a heather meadow, savouring the green as it was to be the last for a long time. This far north we could still read our books at 10:30 p.m. Steve was appalled at how trashy the books were that I put in the air drops. Southern Plantation novels that wade through five generations over 1200 pages are hard going for some one who likes good literature! We seemed to be talking about women all the time — especially our own darlings at home, of course. It's a beautiful land here in the Kitsumkalum, but not a woman in sight! Cool weather produced perfect packing conditions, but meant that all week we only saw the bottoms of many mountains and didn't get the view when we climbed Mount Hadden. From the glacier snout at the head of Bohler Creek we hiked on ice around to the 4700-foot névé 2.5 km to the west. This was as far as John Baldwin and I had made it the previous summer and we were excited about going off into the unknown. The ridge beyond this névé is high and narrow, and from the maps we'd always been intrigued by what the views would be like and what technical challenges there would be getting packs along it. We weren't disappointed. I think scenically it was the most superb ridge I have ever hiked and although the map looked rugged, there were no problems. At the toe of the first rise there was a small tarn with a goat in attendance. We camped on the 6500-foot point where our side trip to Mount Morton began. With the tent on snow nearby, the kitchen was set up on the high point in an amazing sheltered nook that overhung the whole Exstew Valley. After climbing the sharp peak of Morton we visited the little 6700-foot peak

west of camp and moved over to an airdrop on the east ridge of the very prominent 7000-foot peak 3 km north-northeast of the lake at the head of the Exstew River. This peak, which forms the extreme source of the Kitsumkalum River, has massive south walls and a very pretty south west buttress. We lazed away a couple of hours on its summit, gazing in all directions, trying to take it all in.

The morning starts were leisurely in the hot weather. A couple of days we spent almost



Five km north of Mount Keays. Photo: John Clarke.

as much time packing as we did travelling. We marvelled at how this fabulous ridge system continued on and on, and we were living a kind of summer that the North Coast gets only once 5 or 6 seasons. Our focus was on the overwhelming landscape, the route ahead and how the next crux section might go.

On the south ridge of the 7300-foot peak at the extreme source of the Ishkheenickh River we heard voices. Shock! Who could it be? Did we hear voices? The voices took form when two primates carrying packs appeared in front of us. It was Dave Williams and his brother Adrian who was just out from England and was "being shown around the Coast Range". They'd flown into the lake at the source of the Exstew and were traversing out to the Skeena by way of Mount

William Brown, [see page 82]

Steve and I continued around the wonderful horseshoe ridge that encloses the Exstew Glacier and arrived at our airdrop on the 6400-foot dome 2 km southwest of Mount Finley. I was exhausted and was quite happy to see a storm moving in. We spent 6 nights of drizzle in this spot but managed to ascend the lovely 7000-foot peak between our camp and Mount Finley. When we returned from the peak we crawled inside as a big downpour had started. Fifteen minutes later, when

day we looked down from the ridge onto a bald eagle's back as he floated through a col. The pace was so reasonable that we congratulated ourselves on mornings when we got away by 10 and thought we'd broken a record one morning when we were packed at 9! On day 26, we were hiking on snow on the long flat ridge 5 km west southwest of Mount Morin when I saw a dark form on the snow ahead of us. It was a wolf running at top speed in our direction. Snow sprayed from his feet when he stopped in front of us. His head waved back and forth as he stared at us crouched low beside our packs. Mutual fascination! He took about 5 minutes to circle us, stopping every 3 m for another long stare, and then loped off into the nameless Exchamsiks tributary to the west; we'd been introduced to the locals. During stops we would have 50 horseflies around us and our packs — I'd never seen anything like it! On the steep bump north east of Mount Keays, Steve announced he'd made an "irreversible heather move" on the way up; that was the extent of the technical challenges on our main route. Our camp on the south ridge of the 6400-foot peak 1 km southwest of Mount Morin was perched on a marvellous narrow granite ridge, the tent occupying the only flat spot. From this camp, we climbed over the 6400-foot peak and even went beyond to the summit of Mount Morin from whose summit we scanned the Ecstall River country with binoculars: next year. At the next airdrop camp, a ptarmigan paraded her brood past the tent in the twilight. There were animal tracks around most of the airdrops but no problems — it seemed the cayenne-soap mixture was working. After a day tramping the ridge 5 km east of Mount Morin, we dropped down a miraculous diagonal ledge that

Steve was coming back into the tent from a pee, he casually said, "Did you want me to bring in your camera?" While I was furiously drying the camera with toilet paper he said slowly, "Did you want me to bring in your boots too?"

Ah! — 6 days of complete bed rest! When we got going again, it was our 25th day out. I could hear Steve mumbling behind me, "The trip of the year, 'cause it took a year," and "This isn't a trip, it's a lifestyle!" We were getting along extremely well, and on a long traverse that is fortunate, since the person you left the end of the logging road with is not the same person you are sharing a tent with on day 25! The impossible ridge continued winding back and forth, up and down through the ranges, always letting us sneak through the difficult looking spots. One

provided the only route to the ridge system north of the very prominent 6300-foot peak west of the lower Exstew River. At its foot we camped in a little green oasis with crystal streams flowing among moss, flowers and grass. A gorgeous marmot garden camp-site, but the heat and flies were merciless. After laundry, a mashed potato dinner and yellow jello we crawled inside the tent for a break from the flies. Lying in the stifling heat for a long time we finally figured that we could cool the tent by undoing the fly at the back and let the air come through the window. We felt like a couple of real geniuses!

August 5 was day 32. We left our little home in the hollow and packed up a broad gully. A young marmot, perched on a rock, watched us as we walked past. He was dark grey with a white patch on his nose and he was intensely curious. Higher up, we were hammered by a powerful cold wind and despite being tired I didn't want to stop short of the last airdrop in case this was the beginning of a long storm. When we reached the drop, just northwest of the 6300-foot peak, I searched everywhere for a tent site out of the wind but couldn't find one. We set up on the only possible site — right on the ridge crest. Once inside, horizontal rain started and we had to brace our bodies against the poles. Some of the gusts were pretty alarming, the tent bending right over and it took both of us to hold up the windward side. Then after 2 hours, the wind suddenly slowed and it rained for 3 days. Storm routine. I read a book about two identical people who meet and swap lives and Steve is reading something described as "murder most British." The afternoons were whiled away abusing the snack bags, reading our books and drinking peach and raspberry drinks. Total guilt-free idleness! Lulls in the rain permitted short walks

among the heather, tarns and sun-capped snow banks dotting this gorgeous granite ridge. On the second afternoon of the storm, after a downpour, we discovered a new tarn had formed in front of (and in) the tent. Between violent bursts of rain we moved the tent to a sloping but drier site nearby. On August the 8th, I wrote in my diary, "This is day 35. We are anxious for it to clear up as we would like to get out to the Skeena, have some fresh vegetables and see some WOMEN! Ravens hanging around." Next morning we climbed the 6300-foot peak and saw the last leg of our route to the Skeena from the summit. Three days later, 38 days after leaving the Mayo Creek logging road, we dragged ourselves out onto the highway, scrubbed up in a Creek and stuck our thumbs out for a ride into Terrace.

After convalescing in Smithers for a week Steve and I teamed up with Doug Herchmer for a trip to Mount Valpy which we'd been admiring from the Exstew for weeks. We climbed out of the Gitnadoix Valley up the ridge south of Clay Creek and put our high camp on the ridge 3 km west of Mount Valpy. The peak is a big pyramid with the most unbelievably loose rock and our climb went up a dead straight gully on the west face.

After the Valpy trip, I went down to Kemano to try to reach some beautiful peaks in the Tsaytis River headwaters but brief breaks in the pounding rain revealed the fresh snow line descending on each of the 7 days I waited. Still not willing to end the season I went to Prince Rupert hoping to reach a 6400-foot peak in the Ecstall River. Cold rain bouncing 5 cm off the sidewalks in town didn't encourage me to go back into the mountains.

## Rowing To Mount Waddington

*Margaret Brown*

Row! Dave, Row! — only 50 more kilometres to go." So much for an exciting spinnaker run up Bute Inlet; foolishly, we had counted on the strong inflow winds that roar up the coastal inlets in mid-summer. Instead, it was flat calm and drizzling. Yet, occasionally, the curtains of mist would part, giving us an enticing glimpse of the mountains. As well, we could see the snow level creeping down to less than 1,000 metres above the sea, likely guaranteeing interesting travel on the Waddington Glacier. But even the spectacle of countless waterfalls tumbling directly to the sea from the glaciers and snowfields above could not compensate for the bone chilling, discouraging weather. Ian and I abandoned Dave to his task of towing three tons of sailboat and retreated below to brew some tea and check out all the articles we could find in back issues of the Journal on this area of the Coast Range. Unless the weather improved, the photos in the Journal might be all we would see of Mount Waddington.

Finally, at dusk we reached the head of Bute Inlet and the mouth of the mighty Homathko River. Now what? Where do we leave the boat? If we were in a kayak like Kobus Barnard

(actually, Kobus and his talk at our Vancouver Island Section, Alpine Club Banquet, were what inspired us to pursue our passion for sea-mountain adventures), we could simply ditch our kayak in the trees; a sailboat was a different matter entirely. After a few near misses with the sandbars at the mouth of the river we opted to tie to a log boom.

At dawn, a crash followed by a resounding splash and a rough rocking motion jarred us awake. It was not a tidal wave, only a bundle of logs hitting a nearby ramp and tumbling into the salt-chuck. This commotion was followed by the appearance of Doug the boomman. He helped us find a safer place for the boat and insisted on giving us a ride to the camp at Scar Creek, 28 km up the valley.

With apologies to all wilderness purists, at this point we abandoned all delusions of moral superiority and stopped questioning the ethics of mechanized mountain travel. Up to this point we had been "pure" — we are fortunate to live on the coast just west of Victoria, where our sailboat is moored in front of our house. Thus, this journey began by walking out the door and down to the beach, where we rowed ourselves and our mountaineering gear out to the sailboat. With that consolation in mind, we happily piled into his crummy.



Early morning on Mount Munday. Photo: Ian Brown .

Tempted by the offer of a further lift up Scar Creek, we passed the time by succumbing to the generosity of the cook, and when we could not eat any more, availed ourselves of a handy beam on the cook house roof to do a little review of our system for crevasse rescue. All that fresh snow had me spooked.

The crummy was stopped by a washout about 10 km up Scar Creek. There, we finally put on our packs and were ready to start climbing. Even though it was now late afternoon, after bouncing for hours along the logging roads we were eager to get going. We planned to climb up the side of the valley and reach the ridge lying between Scar Creek and the Waddington Glacier. We then intended to travel as far along the ridge as possible, heading toward Mount Waddington, and then, when the ridge got too tough, travel on the glacier.

We did not know what surprises and challenges lay hidden among the innocent-appearing contours on the topographical map, or whether indeed we would even find a possible route. We pushed pretty hard, racing against the sun, to reach the top of the ridge before dark. The ground got steeper and steeper, and the only feasible route evolved into a narrow spur separated from the gentler valley by severely eroded gullies. We sweated our way up, clawing the dirt, hanging on to stunted trees, and praying this spur would not dead-end in a cliff face. In our rush to get away from the logging operations we had neglected to fill our water bottles. The stakes for topping out on the ridge were getting higher. At times, between the miseries of bushwacking, my thirst, the heavy pack, and my fear of the steep ruggedness of the spur ridge, I doubted I was up to this first challenge, let alone any others to come. Finally, the

angle of the terrain eased and we walked onto alpine meadows. Shortly afterwards, we found a small stream and a level patch of heather where we collapsed, exhausted, but relieved.

The nearly full moon crested the ridge behind our backs. Before my eyes the moonlight revealed glittering, silvery-blue castles and towers on the far side of the ridge. They seemed to loom over the meadows and scattered trees. In the early morning, after walking to the far edge of the ridge, we gazed over the expanse of the lower Waddington Glacier. It was a mass of shining deep blue séracs and crevasses, reaching down the Coola Creek Valley about 5 km, up for several more kilometres until the ice merges with the snow, and was 6 to 7 km across. After admiring this beautiful but chaotic river of ice we thankfully continued up our ridge.

The ridge lasted until about 1,500 m, and we were then forced on to the glacier. The broken-up Waddington Glacier poses plenty of challenges, and we could not even see any of the peaks above 2,700 m as they were shrouded by their own clouds. We did our best to keep the rope reasonably tight between us, and headed off in what we hoped was the right direction. "Oh, for a pair of skis!" I thought as I waded through the soft mushy snow. Suddenly, one of us broke through into a hole. After the first few adrenalin-filled experiences of breaking through, we soon became a little less terrified, but not quite to the point wagging a leg about in the slot to get a sense of the direction of the crevasse. (The Munday's, the first explorers of the Mt. Waddington Range, apparently did this on their trips!)

The glacier seemed unusually broken up and chaotic. We reached a particularly nasty maze of crevasses and were

contemplating the best route when, 10 m uphill of us, a Volkswagen-sized block of ice cracked off and crashed into a neighbouring crevasse. Our instinct was to get out of there — immediately — but our urge to run was thwarted by the two other bodies on the rope. We carried on as fast as we could and vowed to camp at the first reasonably safe place.

Camp was just below Mystery Pass. From the pass we finally had our first glimpse of Mount Waddington. Its severe west-facing upper tower and gendarme were daunting. At this point we easily decided that we would be happy to get closer for a better look, but climbing Mount Waddington in our condition and its condition was not for us. Turning our eyes to Mount Munday, 750 m above the pass, we decided we would go that instead; tomorrow, if the weather was good.

Setting up the tents proved quite challenging. The weather was deteriorating, dark clouds were forming over the peaks, and the wind was piping up. If we did not manage to create some kind of protection for ourselves, in the middle of this god-forsaken glacier we might not even last until morning, let alone do any more climbing. Oh, how I regretted not bringing a shovel! But — a shovel in mid-August? The cooking pots were a poor substitute, but the vision of us being blown off the face of the glacier was an effective spur. We managed to build a small wall of pot-shaped lumps and then noticed, fortunately, that the clouds were moving off and the winds were dying down.

We started very early, hoping to avoid soft snow, but at 3,000 metres, the fresh snow had not frozen overnight. We ploughed on up. The headwall was split by a continuous, large bergschrund — fortunately this recent dump of fresh snow was good for something. In one

place snow had slid and filled in the big crack; perhaps we could cross there. Finally we were on the last stretch, with one more bergschrund just below the summit. The sky to the north was filled with the awesome spires of Mount Waddington, Combatant and Tiedemann peaks. The summit of Mount Munday was blissfully warm and peaceful; a beautiful place to rest and gaze forever at peaks in every direction, including some of our old friends on Vancouver Island. We could even see Mu Peak far to the south. This peak flanking the Lillooet Glacier was the site of a storm-bound camp earlier this year as we awaited a break in the weather to cross a ridge connecting to the Manatee Range. Only the thought of the dangerously softening snow spurred us to climb down.

The next day we had a mercifully uneventful trip back to the ridge. After a restful night in a meadow by a lake, we travelled on, stopping a few hours later by another lake for a swim. I dallied in the water, luxuriating in the delicious feeling of swimming. I finally got out of the water and was standing on the shore letting the wind and sun dry my body when I exclaimed, "This is wonderful, a corner of paradise with this sparkling water and that unreal blue ice just beyond the trees. I don't even have to worry about falling into another crevasse." Ian said, "Yeah, it is pretty special, but I have been kind of worried about bears." Dave casually piped up, "There is one just in front of you, Margaret." I looked up, thinking that Dave was joking, and saw, just 5 m in front of me, leering from behind a tree, a large bear. It stepped from behind the tree and came toward me — I was petrified! It was about 200 kg, and very close. Even if I could have yelled, I was afraid of startling it. Because I felt so vulnerable — being absolutely naked — I

reached for my polypro under-shirt. Fortunately, the odour of the polypro worn for a week straight is no more appealing to bears than it is to humans. The bear turned and shuffled away.

With no further adventures, we made it back to our boat. We toasted our trip with beer that had been cooled by the Homathko River flowing under the hull. Relaxing in the comfort of our boat we started musing on the possibilities of further adventures. Hmm. Mount Munday would make a great spring ski objective. How about next April...?



Mount Waddington from Finality Mountain. Photo: John Baldwin.

## Ten Years After John Baldwin

It is fairly well known that the summit of Mount Waddington is a large rock tower, but less well appreciated is the amazing bulk of the mountain. The summit forms part of a ridge that runs in a northwesterly direction and is continuously over 2800 m for almost 18 km. To the north of this uplift ice plummets into the deep trenches of the Scimitar and Tiedemann Glaciers which flow towards the interior. On the south side, the ice instead seems to have backed up against the bulk of Waddington to form an icefield that hangs between the lower summits that stretch southwards to the Whitemantle Range. Through contortions of geography this mass of ice flows almost exclusively into the drainage of the Franklin Glacier.

At the beginning of May, 1992, Steve Ludwig, Helen Sovdat, Stan Sovdat, and I flew to a logging camp on the Homathko River near Scar Creek with plans to cross over the Franklin Glacier on skis — from the Homathko River, on the east, to the Klinaklini River, on the west. Within minutes the loggers had offered to give us a ride as far up Scar Creek as they could drive. This took us to near the creek draining from the Bert Glacier. We camped that night on the road. The snow level was high for this time of year and the first signs of spring growth were evident in the surrounding cut-blocks. We had somehow become attached to the idea of using crazy carpets to haul gear instead of using an airdrop. To use the creations that Steve had fabricated for us over the winter we had to get everything to the snow first. As a result, our progress was exceptionally slow the next morning as we staggered along the road with our supplies. Stan had a new watch complete with a digital altimeter, and with this new toy

we determined that we were able to gain 75 m of elevation between rests.

Near treeline we were finally able to use the crazy carpets. The general idea was to put slightly more than one week's supply of food in the crazy carpet and to carry the remainder of our two-week supply in our packs. As we emerged out of the trees, the stunning views of the large glaciers and icefalls in the Whitemantle Range came into view, and these accompanied us the next day as we continued up to the Agur-Munday Col. With great delight we left everything in camp the day after that, and made a side trip to Crenelle and Irresistible. Irresistible was not really so, but Grenelle was a wonderful summit stuck on the edge of the tremendous wall that rises along the south side of the Tiedemann Glacier. It offered spectacular views of the entire Tiedemann basin including the regular route on Waddington and the south sides of Tiedemann, Asperity and the Serra peaks. To the south, the undulations of the Waddington Glacier plunged towards the darkness of the Homathko River valley and far beyond the blue silhouettes of many side valleys, a corner of Bute Inlet could be seen. As we returned to camp in the warm afternoon light, the valley of Scar Creek lay hidden in its trench, and the wide expanse of the Waddington

Glacier seemed to blend in with the icefalls of the Whitemantle range that stretched south as far as one could see.

Wind the next morning signaled a change in the weather, so we rushed up Mount Munday under a grey sky before struggling with the crazy carpets on our descent into Ice Valley. Only lower down on the gentler slopes was it possible to stay comfortably ahead of the contraptions. A burst of afternoon sunshine blazed into the deep crevasses at the junction of the Corridor Glacier, but a cloud cap remained on Waddington above and the roar of the wind on the summit tower was easily heard from the silence of this hollow. For the next three nights we camped on the Dais Glacier immediately north of Cavalier Mountain. During lulls in the storm we covered the adjacent slopes with tracks in the fresh powder. And while Steve and Stan recovered from a cold that I had passed on, Helen and I climbed Cavalier in a mixture of fog and mist and sunshine.

As the storm abated, we moved camp across the head of the Franklin Glacier to a pass south of Finality Mountain. The following morning we woke up to one of those clear cold days that are too good to be true. As we skied up Finality in the fresh snow, the expanse of the upper lobes of the Franklin Glacier spread out below us,



Skiing the head of Waddington Glacier. Photo: John Baldwin.

rimmed by Waddington and the Whitemantle Range beyond. For the first time, we could now get a good look at the rest of our route, which lay south over the top of Jubilee Mountain. We couldn't resist climbing the higher north peak of Bezel Mountain before packing up and skiing down the smooth surface of the Confederation Glacier. By now our loads were light enough that we rolled up the crazy carpets and carried them on our packs. This added immensely to the pleasure of the 6 km run.

Our last day on skis was one of the best days of the trip. We headed up the shoulder of Jubilee Mountain, still somewhat unsure as to our route past the mountain, but at 7500 feet (thankful to be back on a map in feet!) we decided to circle around the north side of the peak. We left our packs at the small pass at 8100 feet and continued to the summit. We were able to herringbone up the first narrow part of the gentle, but exposed, north ridge before leaving our skis. The summit block appeared difficult, however, and it was not until we got out the 7 mm rope and Steve excavated a trail along the knife-edged ridge that it became possible to reach the top. This entire procedure was accompanied by Steve's mutterings of annoyance at losing his hat, which blew off down the west face. Jubilee is set back enough from the Waddington group that almost the entire area of the upper Franklin Glacier and the surrounding summits can be seen at once. We gazed at this view for a long time, mixing it with glimpses into the deep coastal valleys of both the Franklin and Klinaklini Rivers and the upper reaches of Knight Inlet. From our packs, our exit continued in a rather twisted route down the icefall to the west and then through a pass to the head of the Chasm Glacier, from which we

could peer down into the deep cleft of the Franklin Glacier.

We then swung west onto a promontory overlooking the wide coastal valley of the Klinaklini River. It was mid May, yet the dark green valley was rimmed in by peaks covered in a thick creamy blanket of snow. This contrast was accentuated by the peaks of the Ha-iltzuk Icefield lying beyond. Lower down, we weaved in amongst patches of slide alder and we were able to ski right to a camp at the end of the road at 3800 feet.

The next morning the sun crept quietly over the sides of the valley until its long shadows dissipated into a clear spring day. It is only after descending from the surrounding snowfields that the deep valleys of the Coast Mountains can be really appreciated. We began our walk down the valley to the logging camp at the head of the inlet, overwhelmed by the wealth of green vegetation and clear running water. We swam first in Devereaux Lake, and then later in Mussel Creek, so that by the time we met the camp caretaker on the road we were respectably clean.

It was exactly ten years after our first visit to Knight Inlet on skis. In the intervening years our ski tracks had criss-crossed over many of the surrounding glaciers and icefields and now, almost by default, they connected up to form an alpine ski traverse from Bella Coola to the Fraser Valley. This trip had been the last leg to be completed on skis, but there was no real feeling of accomplishment; instead, the joy and excitement of our trip somehow lay in the success of our visit with these high, wild and beautiful places that we had come to know so well.

## ***Serra II—South Ridge***

*Bruce Kay*

In July 1991, Paul Berntsen and I flew onto the Tiedemann Glacier to a campsite on a pleasant spur below the South Face of Serra II. Unfortunately, the weather was generally poor. We made one attempt on Serra II's South Ridge, but were forced back by the weather, which eventually produced 10 cm of new snow right down to the glacier.

After a lengthy time puttering about down in the valley, we started up once again on July 17, late in the afternoon. We bivied in unsettled weather, but eventually awoke to a beautiful day, allowing us to reach Serra II's summit and then the Plummer that afternoon, just as another front cast high cloud across the sky. The route generally followed the crest of Serra II's South Ridge, except when bypassing Phantom Tower on the east, and the big buttress above, again on the east, and when climbing up a ramp leading to a secondary rock buttress. This buttress gave the hardest climbing, with six pitches up to 5.9. We thought the route was like a much longer version of the North Ridge of Stuart in the Cascades, although much more alpine and spectacular, passing such features as Phantom Tower and the unnamed spire on Serra II's southwest side.

There was a lot of low-angled rock, making rock shoes very helpful. The snow and mixed climbing were generally easy, although the snow tended to be horribly rotten. Descent went easily via rappel down the North Face couloir onto the Telloit Glacier.

Serra II, South Ridge. 1066 m, IV+. 5.9, snow/ice to 50°.

F.A.: Paul Berntsen & Bruce Kay, July 17-18, 1991.

## ***Two New Routes On Mount Payne, Northeast Face***

Just as spring equinox marked the end of winter, Helen Habgood, Bob Koen, Robert Nugent and I made the long, brutal approach (2 hours along a road, with a total elevation gain of about 250 m!) without even putting on our skis. By 6 the next morning, we had cramponned up avalanche-compressed snow into the base of a gully which shoots up the right side of the face, and Robert was fighting with the fragile shell of near-vertical ice on the 40-foot first step. A hundred metres higher it was my turn to pull through a couple of shorter steep sections before getting belayed to the rocks on the right. As Helen followed, a good-sized sluff poured down the gully, cascading over her for a minute or so and adding a distinct excitement to the steepness.

We traversed right on the snow rib beside the gully and continued up, now unroped. We opted to gain the crest of the north ridge via a thin gully on the right, rather than expose ourselves to further shifts in the continuation of the main couloir. An easy ramp then led us rightward to the upper west ridge, and just on noon we walked onto the summit.

The descent was "cake:" south and east down snow and through a tiny hanging valley to the notch at the top of the huge gully east of the peak, one rap over the cornice, and (sorta tiring, this bit!) something approaching 600 m of face-in downclimbing on pretty steep snow to the point from which we could wander back to camp. Nice weekend, pleasant company, good route — it all reinforces my impression that this valley is hard to beat for bigger winter and spring routes. Check it out!

Mount Payne, Northeast Face. 600 m, 45-50° snow, with three 80° WI 3 steps.

F.A.: March 22, 1992. 8 hours camp to summit, 3 hours down. Helen Habgood, Bob Koen, Robert Nugent, and Don Serl.

### *Don Serl*

On the afternoon of May 22, 1992, Fred Beckey had all of his gear strewn all over the street in front of my house. Fortunately, we got it all loaded into my car before anybody drove by, and soon we were battling the rush hour traffic out of Seattle on our way to the Canadian border with visions of bagging another new climb in the Cascades.

After making all of the required stops at McDonald's and the supermarket, we pulled into the front yard of Fred's friend, Maxim, who lived on the Chilliwack River. Maxim was busy parapente guiding that weekend and was unable to join us on the climb, but he did mention that he wouldn't attempt to descend Mount Payne without his parapente. I wondered what he meant by that statement.

The next morning, after the requisite stop at the Husky for coffee, we were on Highway 1, and then the Sumallo River Road. With considerable encouragement on Fred's part, I managed to get my car quite a ways up the road until we were finally stopped by a washout and creek. We hiked the remainder

of the road into the head of the cirque, which was only about 4 km from where we parked the car.

After settling into camp right beneath the face of Mount Payne, we tried to figure how we were going to get up and down our peak. It appeared that we could connect up the snow gullies and rock bands on the Northeast Face of Mount Payne, but it was not very obvious how we would get off of the mountain.

We got up before dawn the next morning and were kicking steps up the slope leading to the base of the face. "What do you think of this snow?" were the words repeated between us, followed by, "I don't know, what do you think?" Soon we were climbing up the first rock band, which had scant protection, but was more solid than we expected. We managed to connect up a series of ramps, ledges and snow gullies until we were standing at the bottom of the big snow slope in the center of the face.

By this time, we realized that it was getting to be a very warm day. The snow slope looked like a good thing to avoid, and we stayed on a rock rib that ran alongside the snow slope. Eventually we reached the top of the rib and had to decide how we were going to finish this situation into which we had climbed. An exit couloir led to the shoulder of the peak

to our right, and we figured that it was probably the same couloir used by Don Serl to finish the route that he had put up this face that spring. At this point, with cornices collapsing on the summit ridge above us, our main concern was getting off of the face.

Fred belayed me out into the exit gully. I climbed the length of the rope, anchored myself into a fluke and buried my ice axe; so far, the snow was holding. I brought Fred up and he led on through in hip-deep snow. We were able to get in rock belays on the side of the couloir in places, which offered a little bit of security. As I belayed Fred above me, I heard a rumble and was horrified to see an avalanche slide down the couloir. Fortunately, we were both on rock ledges at the time and were out of the line of fire.

After more steep, scary snow climbing, we stood safely on the shoulder of the summit tower looking down the south side to the Silver-Skagit road, 2000 m below us. Descending the corniced North Ridge was out of the question, as was any descent route back into the cirque that we started from. I was beginning to see why Maxim would want a parapente to get off of Mount Payne! The only reasonable way down would be to descent to the Silver-Skagit road and hope we could get a ride back out to Hope. We found a route down the south side, aided by Fred's routefinding and a goat trail which got us through some very improbable cliffs. We arrived in the forest by dark, where a fire made for a relatively comfortable bivy.

The next morning we finished the descent to the road and were faced with the task of hitchhiking on a road in the middle of nowhere in the middle of the week. Our only hope lay in the possibility of finding a retired person out fishing or camping, who would be willing to give a couple of

disreputable-looking people like ourselves a ride. Aided by Fred's persistence and smooth talking, we were able to get a ride all the way back to my car, thanks to a retired gentleman from Hope who was out for a drive. The difficulties of the past two days were soon forgotten as we contentedly drove home, having done another first ascent in the Cascades.

Mount Payne. New route on the Northeast Face above the Sumallo River drainage. Class 4 rock, with snow up to 50°.

F.A.: May 24, 1992.

Fred Beckey and Mark Landreville.

*Mark Landreville*

## ***On "Cheating," Commitment, And The Beauty Of An Image***

*David E. Williams*

I had all summer. My brother Adrian, from England, had just two weeks before my wedding. He was a victim of time: "I don't want to find myself sitting on my ass in Canada when I could be climbing in the Alps!"

Buffeted, bumped, jostled to the core, cliffs everywhere, senses overloading, ice shelves growing by the minute, peak after peak, noise, grit and wind in every pore: a horrendous beginning to a trip. Had we forgotten anything: cheque, money, pen and signature, intense, and silence...

Standing at the edge of a small lake at the head of the Exstew River valley, prints in the silt, greens and blues, rock, immense sky. I was where I had dreamed of being.

I had, however, missed so much getting to this place so efficiently! I regretted immensely succumbing to the pressure of time constraints. I felt awful. At least Adrian would not be "sitting on his ass" for two weeks.



Mounts Rideout (left) Payne (right). Photo: Mark Landreville.





Helicopters are a curse to the wilderness in its complete, aesthetic essence. Air support is one thing, but air access is something completely different and, in my opinion, repulsive. There are no excuses for its use, only a lack of commitment to both the wilderness (something that is dwindling so rapidly), and to lifestyles that we have all but lost.

I loaded my immense pack. Poring over the maps, we saw that the terrain looked uncertain, so lots of hardware was included, knowing that we were physically in for a rough time. I faced my conscience; Adrian looked exhilarated, though perhaps somewhat bewildered, scared of his pack. "Where to, Dave?" What had I introduced him to?

A slow trudge up the rock-covered ice of the lower Exstew Glacier ensued. Cliffs, ice falls, ice walls — below, meadows and trees — each dominant in its sphere of space, glorious and rugged beyond description. Adrian was about to experience, for two weeks, the pristine wilderness of the Coastal Mountains of B.C. I felt good with this thought. Feeling stronger, I forgot about my pack and began the trip.

After a dead-end start, we eventually ice-climbed our way out of the Exstew valley. The following week saw us wandering and rambling along the northern ridge systems of the Exstew. We walked over

snow domes, scrambled up rock pinnacles, looked upon picture-postcard scenes time and time again. Glaciers, flat and slow, with the classic moraine streak penciled in; others, still and white, at the point of flowing, or crumbling in intense cold blue. A valley alive with thunderous crack and after-roar. Peaks to the horizon, some rounded and old, others sharp, piercing the ice and growing to the sky. Walking up, down and over, above it all, round and round on crampon points or toes, head this way and that, views and views, our minds crazed with plans of trips. Hugs and shakes on meeting John and Steve, their excess nuts and dried fruit were sorely welcomed. What a place to meet.

Off again to the perfect ridge, winding and snaking into the distance, real with exposure, at times under a metre wide; facing south between our toes 1350 m, a mere 760 m facing north. Forgiving and user-friendly, the ridge lead us to a hidden gully, a gently sloping heathery bench, and only a moment of ropes and gear. Camped at the perfect perch — below with little or no textbook history, but full of myths and legends — a U-shaped valley full of green with never a sound of axe or saw.

On we tramped, rapping through an icefall from a monster boulder on the lip of a slot, snow bollard or pin banged hard and fast into the overhung

refrigeration of the ice depths below. From the bergschrund or slot, with its seemingly infinite, partially-covered black space, a short pitch and out into the spacious sunshine. Snow runnels, with proportions I wish to forget, turned a pleasant afternoon stroll into a tiring drunken walk, but the lengthening light and nature's asymmetry combined to create a photographer's dream and consumed the day.

Descending from the ridges, we felt we were walking where time is just beginning; valley hemmed desolate and inspiring at a glacier's retreating edge.

Onto Mount William Brown and its local cousins all mist-covered and shrouded with fine arête. Bagging peaks galore, firsts and seconds, (oh, the ego); what a farce, but what a thrill! Weather bummed for a day or two, the inner damp chill of an endless cloud, moments of anxiety (my mother will soon be arriving in Vancouver; we met her with time to spare).

At Mount Morris after a day trip south, we turned to the ridge system due east above Shames River. Heather, snow and slab, spectral rock formations, flat icecap crashing to a tumultuous end, a perfect spire (but weather not permitting), we walked and scrambled absorbed. Delving into the green textures, but for the irritant of ferocious horseflies, we relaxed. View-bound, our final night balanced between the Shames and Zymagotitz river valleys. We awoke to a hazy dawn filled with a full-length glitter reflection of the ox-bowing Zymagotitz River. Wild cotton, lilies and hues of green, the touch of cool air, a short bush thrash, bird song, squelching mud and smells — a dream-like descent. Then on into the hell of a defiled and altered landscape, the results of human outdoor pursuits: the summer-deserted Shames downhill ski area, and the forest industry, the industry

that indirectly pays the bucks for trips such as this!

Fourteen kilometres of grueling logging road followed, our feet bursting for air, until finally a kindly soul and his travel-sick dog, with air through the hair, in the back of a pick-up — speed. Terrace, the Greyhound, fresh-baked and fresh-grown produce. B.C.'s glorious country, a place to cherish in its complete essence, to spend time, to grow and to get to know a brother wonderful!

## *Mount Joffre Winter Ascent*

*Bruce Kay*

On March 19, 1992. Greg Foweraker and I climbed the Flavelle/Lane route on the northeast face of Mount Joffre. We found seven good pitches of mixed climbing with aid in bottoming face cracks on the second and fifth pitches. The top 100 m was third class to the summit. Descent was via the northwest ridge/north cirque back to our bivy below the face. This is also an excellent summer route giving good granite rock climbing, as a day trip from the car or the Cerise Creek hut. Contrary to the suggestion in Bruce Fairley's *Alpine Guide*, the best way to start the route is in a right-facing corner near the bottom of the gash separating the Flavelle/Lane buttress from the Buzowski/Robinson buttress. Above, face climb straight up a wall (5.8) and the rest is obvious. Take KBs and LAs, pro up to #2-1/2 Friend. Most of the route is easy 5th class.

Mount Joffre, Northeast Face. Flavelle/Lane Buttress. IV, 5.9, A2 mixed; in summer, III, 5.8

F.W.A: Greg Foweraker and Bruce Kay, March 19, 1992.



Descending below the Champion. Photo: D. Sarkany

## ***Gear Freaks In The Coast Mountains***

*David Sarkany*

Sailing our collapsible kayak "Slinky" into Toba inlet away from the pleasure boat-crammed Desolation Sound was a relief. Every now and then, a boat would still pull up close to us to take a photo of the unusual sight: a kayak with sails and having ice axes, helmets and an assortment of other climbing goodies lashed to its deck. Once they had their fill of photos, the boats would gear up to top speed, leaving wondrous wakes to test Slinky's surfability.

After a late evening of eating oysters and being entertained by the seals of Waddington Channel we caught a sunny days worth of gentle inflow and sailed to the head of Toba inlet. The entry into the fiord seemed to mark the start of this mountain trip; all of a sudden the mountains grew up, pull-out beaches were few and far between, and a change of emotional atmosphere soon followed.

In a perverse way I like to convince myself that the reason for my mountain trips is to study movement in the mountains. This summer, Maria Cundy and

I designed this trip to provide us with as many forms of motion as possible. The plan was to spend three weeks kayaking, hiking, climbing and flying in the Toba-Tahumming area. Using the most sensitive of crafts seems to put one in the most contact with the environment

Toba's sheer walls offered us few views of the peak that was our goal. It is known unofficially as "Champion," named after the leader of a group who in the early 1900s settled the Toba valley in an effort to create a Utopian community. A day was spent resting and packing at a now-unused log dump near the mouth of the Tahumming River. We cached the kayak by hanging lines from two 10 m-high fuel tanks, suspending the boat out of reach from critters of all sizes.

This being the third week of August, 1992, we were in the middle of a heat wave. Roasted and baked by the blazing sun, we hiked up the logging roads on the west side of the Tahumming river. Our heavily-weighted packs full of climbing gear, one week's worth of food and paragliders, slowed us down and made the heat feel even more intense. In a moment of brilliant inspiration we suddenly wondered: are we gear freaks.

Needless to say, we sat

into every creek and pool possible. A half hour bushwack from the slash at the end of the road brought us to gentle-angled granite slabs that shot into the alpine. We called this the "Humming Ave," the walking was so nice. Not quite making the lake at 3420 feet before dark, we found a cozy meadow by a pond, made puff-ball stew and fell straight to sleep.

Next day in the heat, we continued our trudge and reached a 5400-foot pass which was in easy reach of Champion. We made camp in a sheltered hollow on the broad, slabby pass. It was truly a beautiful place to be. Relaxing over the next few days we swam in our own personal swimming pool-sized tarn, indulging in the good bouldering and amazing views of the peaks of the Tahumming drainage and the green of Toba inlet.

After scoping out our peak, we climbed Champion's west ridge, roping up for a few low fifth class steps. We admired John Clarke, who had done this alone when the ridge was covered with several inches of snow. We had a beautiful day and views all around. It was horizon to horizon of granitic ridges, spires and walls mixed with ocean and forest. At the base of the ridge we bivied the night in full view of a glowing sunset and shooting star performances.

The next morning, with a cold north easterly blowing, we trudged back to our previous campsite, packed our cached goodies and continued along the ridge that jutted out over the inlet's mouth — our intended launch site. Late that evening we found a reasonably good launch site and pitched camp. When we awoke the following morning the northeast upper-level wind flow was still in full force; however, the ribbons

that we had left down on the Tahumming Delta showed nothing. By noon the wind had died down completely and the landing zone flagging was still motionless. We made the decision to fly.

After laying out our paragliders and after a few aborted attempts, Maria launched into a thermal that was floating up the mountain side. I soon followed suit. Conditions were such that I could have soared on this sunlit side of the inlet for a while, but Maria was heading for the landing site. I followed. It took a few minutes to lose most of the 1600 m in altitude. It was great floating in the middle of the inlet but soon worries about wind strength had me occupied with landing where I wanted to, rather than enjoying the view. Just above the landing zone, I watched Maria get tossed around and then miss the runway, settling into some five-metre alders. At about 600 feet, I hit the same pocket of turbulence and had a more-or-less complete collapse. Fortunately, I popped out of it almost immediately and landed safely on the runway.

We had left the flight for too late in the day, taken a chance and had caught a surge of inflow with associated turbulence; sometimes lessons only seem to be learned the hard way. After a good bush crash and slough swim, Maria was back on the runway. We walked back to our cached boat, feeling very wired and small in the aftermath of the flight. It felt so good to be back on the ground, feasting on our best food by the fire till after midnight, contemplating our trip and the flight down.

The paddle out was a great wind-down. We lucked in and sailed half the inlet on outflow, stopping for a rest day on a beautiful south-facing beach at the mouth of Toba, gorging ourselves on cod, mussels and oysters. We then caught the tidal current into Okeover I86unlet

just as the first storm front in three weeks began to roll in — back to our van, civilization and a beer.

## **Rock And Ice Climbing In The Pacific Northwest**

*Steve Brushey*

In the past two years, the Terrace area has experienced a renewed interest in rock and ice climbing. The area which has seen the most climbing is Copper Mountain, just minutes east of Terrace. The potential for this area is phenomenal, if the desire to seek out and develop new routes exists and the weather cooperates. The climbing at Copper Mountain is very similar to Squamish, except there are no crowds and, at present, there are only a small number of climbers who use the area on a regular basis.

The area is divided into two sections: the North Apron and South Apron. The North Apron has seen the most activity as access is somewhat easier. Both areas can be reached on foot within fifteen minutes of parking. The climbing consists

of moderate to steep slab and crack climbing. Presently, there are 14 routes on the North Apron and five on the South Apron, with both areas having routes under development.

This past summer, the South Apron saw little activity, while the North Apron saw the completion of three new routes. Garnet Watson completed a three-pitch project, Houdini, in late summer, to produce a 5.10c/dfriction/crackclimb. The top two pitches combine with Breakfast of Champions. The route should rapidly gain popularity among local climbers as it offers great access to the upper wall. Dave Myers, formerly of Prince George, culminated his quest for multi-pitch climbs to complete a three-pitch route that is yet to be named. The bottom two pitches offer steep slab climbing, with the final pitch being a steep corner up into an alcove of rock before exiting on a treed platform. Dave also cleaned, bolted, and then led a 15m diagonal quartz seam: shaded by the surrounding trees, Eclipse requires deft footwork and balance to work through its crux. Noteworthy mention goes to Ken Cripps of Prince Rupert who attempted a 5.10c finger crack just left of Breakfast of Champions. Unfortunately, Ken slipped as he was placing a piece of pro, resulting in a 5 m fall and a sprained ankle. Appropriately named, Sack of Spuds has only been led once before.

There are numerous boulder problems along the power line which offer something of all difficulties. The biggest attraction is a large, 10 m boulder which, up until this summer, only offered an old overhung aid route. It now gives three routes which were manufactured with a Hilti gun. A bolt has been placed on top for those wishing to top-rope the climbs. Situated above is Candy-box. This is a 10-m high, 25-m wide-face offering climbs from

5.4 up to 5.10d. It is a popular place for soloists and beginners alike. This gem even offers an excellent short ice climb in the winter months.

Another developed area is Onion Lake Crags, approximately 30 km south of Terrace, towards Kitimat. The area was developed by local Kitimat climber Murray Mitchum, in conjunction with "Fight Gravity '90," where climbers from Prince George to Kitimat met for a weekend of climbing. This crag is often compared to the coarse rock of Joshua Tree. The area offers numerous face climbs and boulder problems. Beware of bolts placed in this rock, as the rock is brittle. Any one top-roping on these bolts should back them up with another form of protection. A topo can be obtained from Terrace locals.

At time of writing, the Pacific Northwest has been experiencing very cold temperatures, which have turned the Terrace-Prince Rupert area into an ice climber's haven. Climbs from WI 2 to a possible WI 7 blanket the area, with the majority of the climbs being in the range of WI 3 to WI 5. Basically, anything climbed this season was a first ascent, as the area has seen very little activity in the past. For a three-week period, there was limited precipitation with little change in the weather, making those areas normally susceptible to avalanches quite safe. Avalanche technician Kevin Christakos combined his years of climbing in Jasper, Alberta, to put up the area's more difficult ice climbs. Kevin's eyes were set on the Plum of the Highway, located 75 km west of Terrace. His attempts on this four-pitch WI 5 ice pillar were thwarted after one pitch by unstable ice conditions. Instead, Kevin, with partner Al Evenchick, went after a one-pitch, WI 3 climb just left of the Plum of the Highway. Kevin also com-

pleted two other first ascents on waterfalls located at Thirty Mile Hill and Exchamsiks, both west of Terrace. By season's end, Kevin will have, no doubt, claimed a few more of the area's harder ice climbs.

The Exstew Valley, 45 km west of Terrace, also offers a broad range of climbs, ranging from WI 3 to WI 5. This area is best accessed by snowmobile when the logging road is not plowed, as the best climbs are located far into the valley. A multi-pitch waterfall seen in the valley has not yet been climbed, but with a few weeks of climbing left, it could very likely turn out to be a classic, high-grade waterfall climb. On a day when even the moose were not moving, Steve Brushey teamed up with long-time Terrace resident Martin Sterner to climb Achilles, a one-pitch WI 2/3 waterfall. Located in the trees at 7.5 km up the road, this climb offers excellent protection from the weather on blustery days. Ken Cripps, respected for his alpine ascents, claimed a beautiful S-shaped waterfall at 9.5 km. This three-pitch, WI 3 waterfall offered excellent ice climbing with solid screw placement. Easily accessed, Howling Wolf should gain popularity. With its proximity to Terrace and high number of waterfalls and seeps, this valley offers perhaps the most climbs in a short distance than anywhere else. Visiting climbers should definitely make this valley one of their stops.

Closer to his home, Ken climbed Super Port, a one-pitch route in Prince Rupert. Looking to push his limits, Ken, on top-rope, went after a high-end, WI 5 ice seep in a rock quarry located 95 km west of Terrace. Numerous quarries along Highway 16 offer similar experiences.

Dave Myers also kept busy putting up climbs east of Terrace. Dave, well known for putting up first ascent rock



Photo: Steve Brushey.

climbs on Copper Mountain, and for his determination in cleaning routes, has been active up the Copper River Forest Service Road. Here, Dave completed a three-pitch, WI 2 waterfall located at km 3, and another two-pitch, WI 2 waterfall at km 9. He has also completed numerous seeps in the area. With the season half over, Dave will certainly add to his growing repertoire of climbs.

With the number of seeps and waterfalls in the Terrace area, and the continued co-operation of Mother Nature for coming winters, this area has the most easily accessible and high standard ice climbs anywhere.

## ***New Routes & Climbs 1992-93***

### ***Copper Mountain Rock Climbs***

Houdini. 5.10 c/d. G. Watson, G. Cassey  
Unnamed. 5.10 b. D. Myers, S. Brushey, M. Lynch  
Eclipse. 5.10 a. D. Myers

### ***Terrace-Prince Rupert Ice Climbs, Winter 1993***

Plum of the Highway. WI 5 (PI). K. Christakos, A. Evenchick  
Unnamed. WI 3. K. Christakos, A. Evenchick  
Little Wing. WI 4. K. Christakos, D. Myers  
Exchamsiks. WI 3. K. Christakos, M. Lynch  
Howling Wolf. WI 3. K. Cripps, S. Brushey  
Achilles. WI 3. S. Brushey, M. Sterner  
Quarry. WI 5. K. Cripps, S. Brushey (top-rope)  
Super Port. WI 3. K. Cripps, M. Gijssen  
CRFSR—3 km. WI 2. D. Myers, S. Brushey  
CRFSR—9 km. WI 2. D. Myers, S. Brushey

A guide is being prepared on the area. For route information

and general information, feel free to contact any of the following people. Visiting climbers are most welcome.

Stephen Brushey: 638-1860, 635-6295 (work) Martin Sterner: 638-1110, 635-6295 (work) Dave Myers: 635-7655 Mick Lynch: 635-3689

## ***Lillooet Icefield***

*Ian Brown*

Four of us — Rudi Buigger, Chris Holm, Margaret Brown and myself — flew into the Tchaikazan Glacier at its junction with the Monmouth Glacier. At least, that is what we thought we flew to; our pilot announced, once we were winging up the Lillooet Valley, that he was from Blue River, so I would have to navigate. I did O.K. with my topos while we were flying up one nice long valley, and had continued success as we buried our cache on Ring Glacier and flew up towards Stanley Smith. Then, during the moment I looked down at the map to mark a crevasse-free descent — lo! — I raised my eyes and nothing was recognizable; just a sea of glacier and peaks. So I told Gene to fly further north, picked a couple of likely looking passes and had him set us down at this glacier junction. It was a lot easier to navigate at the speed of my usual slow plod than it was zipping around the peaks in a chopper, but it still took me a half hour after the helicopter left to be sure we really were where we were. With relief I figured out how to actually get us back to the food cache, and eventually, to the car in the Meager Creek valley. --

We began with a gentle plod up the Tchaikazan Glacier, which Chris, the youth on board, carved up after pretending to forget his water bottle. He netted himself a long set of tele-turns back to the trailhead and a second plod up the glacier. We had an easy climb up Monmouth

the next day, with a belay or two for the more timid where the ridge got narrow. Although an earlier CAJ article suggested the southwest ridge was the tourist route, we rambled up the southeast ridge; I do not think the peak actually has a southwest ridge. To climb Monmouth we camped two nights below the northeast face of Flute, which has some gorgeous ice couloirs that attracted Rudi and Chris. Since they did not have the necessary tools, the couloirs remain for another visit. The upper Tchaikazan Glacier is a spectacular basin, worth a visit by trekkers and rock climbers.

Our next two days took us across the Chapman and Edmonds glaciers, to the west of Mount Fowler. We climbed up an unnamed glacier facing Edmond Creek over a 2900-m pass into the upper Frank Smith Glacier. This was all easy skiing, with a smooth avenue next the rock leading up southwest from the 2400-m level of the Edmonds Glacier. The only sticky part was the drop down the moraine west of Mount Fowler — scary when frozen hard in the early morning. Given our warm, late May weather, it would have been better in the afternoon. We did get the thrill of seeing fresh grizzly tracks on the Edmonds, sufficiently recent that each claw mark was not yet melted out. We decided that tracks were enough of a thrill without meeting the owner.

We suffered through one whiteout-day in camp and then had an incredibly beautiful trek across the rolling Frank Smith and Bridge Glaciers to Stanley Peak. We finished by decorating the north-east slope of the peak with tele-curves. We had to feel our way around Stanley Peak and weave amongst the crevasses in total whiteout, emerging from the goop at 2600 m above a tributary to the Lillooet Glacier. By taking the most southerly slope down to

the Ring Glacier we avoided the icefall west of Stanley Peak. The end of this day was a bated-breath grunt up the Ring, blindly searching for our cache, and then the pigging-out upon finding it. Mysteriously, the cheesecake disappeared entirely on our pig-out, and we ended up pouring a third of a mickey of rye into the snow.

We, being macho men, felt obliged to climb Magera on our day of “rest” at the cache while Margaret spent her energy holding down a Therm-a-rest. In truly sloppy fashion we began late in the morning, so the hot south slopes of Magera required us to follow the rock ridge. This finagling took up too much time, and with yours truly chickening out on a particularly narrow bit of ridge, we came down 150 m short of the summit.

We would have loved a shot at Tisiphone but gave it up in favour of a couple of days in the Manatee. We did climb Lillooet Mountain one early morning and had a glorious run down just as the rising sun first softened the surface. The afternoon was spent in a well-fortified camp on a col below Mu Peak while our only storm ranged.



Skiing Upper Edmonds Glacier.  
Photo: M. Brown.

A hairy, scary trip along the ridge from Mu Peak to Obelia followed. It would be a lovely skiing ridge, but not in dead whiteout, feeling each step to avoid the 300-m plunge to the Lillooet Glacier, or the 600m drop to the Toba valley. As a result of the necessarily slow pace, we spent a night on the ridge and got just one break of sunshine at the foot of Obelia. As we ascended, the murk returned and pushed us off onto the Manatee Glacier. The next day was no better and evaporated our carefully organized climbing plans for the Manatee. We descended the Glacier by braille and, luckily, we missed the crevasses. It was a delight to smell the first trees in 12 days, to spot a marmot, to hear the birds.

We camped in the upper Meager and enjoyed a frightening crossing of Devastator Creek. Of course, all ends come to a good thing in this area — a leisurely boil in the hot springs. Thanks to John Clarke for inspiring us to get out on some of the longer traverses.

## Squamish

### Greg Foweraker

After years of carping at the succession of correspondents who wrote the Squamish Report for the CAJ, I've received my just reward — I'm the correspondent! Part of my strategy to neutralize criticism of what I write was to break the spirit of the editor, which I felt would be easily accomplished by delivering the copy two full months after the deadline.

[Hah! Mr.Foweraker greatly underestimates the extent my spirit has been strengthened by the delay of every report sent to this #\*@%! Journal! — ed.]

The past climbing season was primarily marked by an increased level of development of crags in areas outside the central Squamish hub. There

seem to be as many reasons for this change as there are participants involved and I'm not an analyst; I'll simply suggest the major reason is the desire to avoid the Squamish crowds.

New routes reported cover the Howe Sound Corridor. It should be noted that a new guidebook for the area was published in April 1992 by Kevin McLane. Routes done in the early part of last year which were reported by Kevin are not included here. I have noted key areas where the reader would benefit from referring to A Rock Climber's Guide to Squamish (ISBN 0-9696201-0-1).

### Capilano Canyon

Variation to The Capilano Classic (5. 11e) F.A.: Simon Parsons, Robin Barley. May 1992. Cut right at top of first pitch. Two pitches to the top of the Canyon. Wires to 2-1/2 inches.

### Hoods in the Woods Wall

Located near Porteau Cove. A series of top-rope problems guaranteed to set you straight, ranging from 5.6 to 5.10c. Climbed by John Harvey and Rich Woo.



Guy Edwards & Robin Barley on The Capilano Classic (5.11a), three km from downtown Vancouver. Photo: Kevin McLane.

### Britannia

Howe Unsound (5.10d R) F.A.: Nic Jones. June 1992. Park at Britannia and walk 1-1/2 km north on the tracks. The climb is on a buttress that comes out of the second tunnel.

### Squamish

#### Murrin Park Area

The Shtnoo (5.10b) F.A.: Tim Holwill, Bill Noble, Nic Jones. Aug. 1992. The wall right of Welcome to Squamish. 4 bolts.

Misspent Youth (5.12-) F.A.: Sarkis Vermilyea. April 1992. On Petrifying Wall. Climbs face and cracks left of Caress of Steel. 4 bolts.

Poltergeist 2 (5.11 + ) F.A.: Dean Hart, Harry Kettman. September 1992. Free version of the upper part of Poltergeist, 1st pitch.

Under Pressure (5.11d) F.A.: Jola Sanford. April 1992 Just right of Labyrinth.

Crack R Jack (5.10b/c) F.A.: R. & J. Leslie. Sept. 1992. Crack line right of A Show of Hands.

### Jalap Bluff

Drive by Drilling (5.11a) F.A.: Colin Moorhead, Will Darling. May 1992. South end of Jalap. Start on ledge, head up to and past a hanging block.

Finish up the right hand face of the arête. Bolts and Friends to 2 inches.

### Papoose

Survival Enhancement (5.11a) 2 pitches. F.A.: Nic Jones. Starts left of Duet for Two Hands, stepping left to belay on Papoose One. Climbs into Limbo and through overlaps to Centerfold's station on interesting rock.

### Grand Wall Area

The following two routes are found on an excavated boulder 100 m E. of Cacodemon Rock.

Neurotica (5.13b/c) F.A.: Jim Sandford

Force of Habit (5.12d) F.A.: Jim Sandford

Captain Kirk (5.11a) 2 pitches F.A.: N. Kirk, E. Nomeland. Sept. 1992. Starts near University Wall approach ramp and joins Kneewrecker after 2 pitches.

Grey Matter (5.11 + ) F.A.: Perry Beckham Sept. 1992. Controversial tactics used to establish the climb, but what the heck — the moves are nice...

### North Walls

The Reward (5.10a/b) F.A.: D. Harris. Sept. 1992.

Left-leaning crack system about 80 m R. of the base of



Hamish Fraser drilling on the lead on Genius Loci (5.12b). Photo: Kevin McLane

Angel's Crest. Face climb to crack.

### Smoke Bluffs

N.B.: Climbers should use the new parking lot at the north end of the crags, about 500 m N. of the Blind Channel.

### Boulder Gully

Don't Believe the Hype (5.11a) F.A.: Dean Hart. Aug. 1992. Arête L. of Auntie Gravity. Bolts placed on Hype can be clipped from both these routes.

Lust (5.10d) F.A.: Nic Jones, T. Holwill, B. Noble. Aug. 1992. Face climb between Cool Comfort and Loose Lady. Bolts on this route can be clipped from adjoining ones.

### Smoke Bluff Wall

Jacob's Ladder (aka Elmer's Roof) (5.11d/12a—height dependant) F.A.: Jim Sandford. July 1992. Adhere to the roof R. of Zombie. Sure to take the glue out of you. Worthwhile, bolts.

Through the Never (5.13b/c) F.A.: Jim Sandford. July 1992. Start as for Old Age then straight through roof for 6 bolts.

Niagara Falls (A3 + ) F.A.: Kris Holm, Scott Jeffrey. April 1992. Aid climb at the R. end of Zombie Roof.

### Penny Lane Area

J.H.'s Route (5.11a) F.A.:

John Howe. Aug. 1992. Scoop and crack just R. of Yorkshire Gripper.

Salamander (5.4) F.A.: Glen Payan, John Thompson. Up arête of the huge block L. of Tailwind.

Slightly Overhung Corner (5.10a) F.A.: J. & S. Turley. June 1992.

### Ronin's Corner

Father and Son F.A.: J. & S. Turley. June 1992. Start up Astral Travels and break out R. to the arête, bolt.

### Funarama

Redug (5.9) F.A.: Dave Sarkany, Maria Kundy, Teri Pashuk. July 1992. Located on Cheap Mango Wall between Funarama and Call It A Day Wall.

Salad Sodomy (5.7) F.A.: Dave Sarkany, Maria Kundy, Teri Pashuk. July 1992. Just R. of Redug.

September Song (5.10c/d) F.A.: J. Turley, T. Marks. September 1992. R. of Point Blank. Up L. trending crack, back R. and up E.-facing crack to top.

### High Cliff

Miner Matters (5.10c) F.A.: John Black. Crack/face. 2 bolts then gear.

Miner Details (5.10a) F.A.: John Black. Pro to 1-1/2

inches.

### Cheakamus Canyon

Although climbers have been visiting these crags on an infrequent basis for years, there have been some new developments of note. Access From Squamish turnoff, go 25 km N. on Highway 99 and turn R. onto logging road. After 1 km park at junction and follow spur S. that turns into a trail after passing over a concrete pad that stands as testimony to a bad movie. After 15 minutes you will reach the developed crags. Please respect the projects that arc usually marked with a piece of red tape on the fixed piece. Routes are listed here from N. to S.

Mutation (5.11c) F.A.: Mark Bourdon. 7 bolts.

In The Black (5.11a) F.A.: Bruce Langereis. 5 bolts.

Light My Way (5.10d) F.A.: Bruce Langereis. 4 bolts.

Savage Beagle (5.10b) F.A.: Roger Chayer. 5 bolts.

Mother's Milk (5.11a) F.A.: Roger Chayer. 6 bolts.

Kigijushi (5.10d) F.A.: Keith Reid. 8 bolts.

Dark Don't Lie (5.11b) F.A.: Roger Chayer. 7 bolts.

### Diamonds in the Rough

20 minutes of bush thrashing lead to even more sport routes.

First Time For Everything (5.10b) F.A.: Joost Van Ulden. 4 bolts.

Something Wicked This Way Comes (5.11c) F.A.: Roger Chayer. 5 bolts.

Pictures Of Home (5.11 a) F.A.: Roger Chayer. 4 bolts.

### Lillooet Edge

Located at the hairpin turn on the increasingly popular Duffey Lake road as it snakes out of the Pemberton valley.

Decibels (5.10-/10) F.A.: Robin Barley, Peter Shackleton. Good face climbing L. of Clinging To The Edge. 2 pitches.

Insecticide (5.10/10+) F.A.:

Robin & Nick Barley. Endure your way up to a good 2nd pitch.

Wonderdog (5.11, A0) F.A.: Robin Barley, Peter Shackleton. The second pitch still awaits a redpoint at 5.11 + .

Nimbocile (5.10) F.A.: Robin & Nick Barley. Located around the corner in an overhanging bay, obvious crack.

Sporting Dog (5.11-) F.A.: Nick & Robin Barley. Climbs black, impending weepage, with bolts.

Whispering Wasps (5.9) F.A.: Robin Barley, Sophie Rogers. Located R. of Sporting Dog in a series of grooves.

Lichen Salad (5.10) F.A.: Robin Barley, Sophie Rogers. Located on the right side of the crag, overlooking Lillooet Lake.

## One Man's Squamish

*Greg Foweraker*

Ethics and style are an issue that most folks are without a doubt sick of dealing with, talking about, listening to, and even reading about, but I'm the correspondent now, so I'll have my say!

History suggests that climbers will do as they please, but the current battles in B.C. over the remaining stands of old growth forest should show what happens when we disregard the fact of finite resources — which rock clearly is. Chipping holds, placing bolts beside cracks or denying adventure climbers the opportunity to craft a route on sight are simply not visionary actions.

Most subsequent parties couldn't care less what style a first ascentist employed, however, the main face of the Chief is unique in its potential for unclimbed routes on good rock that is easily accessible. The experiences to be had attempting to climb these lines in an adventurous manner are



Upper column, The Plum. Photo: Don Serl

timeless.

To paraphrase Hamish Fraser, it seems ironic that the introduction of the cordless drill, which allows one-handed bolt placements and provides enormous potential for adventure climbing, has been largely used in a regressive manner. Climbers who are interested in moves alone might consider linking some existing routes — perhaps like Northern Lights, University Wall and



Pitch 1, Rocky Horror Pitch or So. Photo: Don Serl

Freeway in a day.

I'm not suggesting that rap bolting is an evil act. Some of my best friends do the deed and are a credit to their species. Let's just think about using some of the precious areas like the Chief carefully with an eye to creating unique challenges.

One sad final note was the death of Grace Wong last year. Grace was a well-liked and enthusiastic climber who died following a fall from a severed rope while inspecting The Pangranitic Wall.

## *The Plum*

*Don Serl*

Rumor had it that there were a clutch of worthwhile ice routes to be done up towards D'Arcy, but it was only the "big freeze" of 1992/93 that finally saw climbs established. The biggest of them is The Plum of Birkenhead valley. The route follows a series of ice steps in a long snow gully to a final Grade 5 pillar over 500 in above the valley floor.

Robert and I spent the night in his van below the route, and had coffee ready for Jim and Greg when they arrived early in the morning. Open forest led to the lower portions of the gully, and we soon found ourselves below the first 80 m step, which looked like easy Grade 3 from below, but which proved steep and brittle enough to provoke the use of ropes once the respective leaders began to poke their noses into it. A tramp up the gully deposited us at the base of the

steeper second step, which proved to be a pitch and a bit of nice Grade 4. Further up the gully, we surmounted a curving Grade 2 flow, and a short distance higher we emerged into a basin with the final 80 m greenish-yellow wall soaring above us.

While the pitches below had been wide enough that we could climb side-by-side, there was obviously only one line here, on the left. Greg, Robert and I soon found ourselves socializing and enjoying the now-expansive view while Jim battled with steep, incredibly chandeliered, spewing, wet ice. The late afternoon sun gleamed around the corner onto him as he stemmed and trashed his way over the top, and by the time the others had followed, I found myself climbing by headlight. The rappels in the dark went slowly but smoothly and just after midnight we stumbled back out to the vehicles. The drive home and work the next morning were hell, but I do recall smiling a lot when I wasn't yawning. We'd plucked a plum, and the winter was going to be just fine!

The Plum. 7 pitches, Grade 4, WI 5.

F.A.: January 17, 1993. Jim Brennan, Greg Foweraker, Robert Nugent and Don Serl.

The climb is located in a long gully on the right, 16 1/2 km north of Mount Currie, towards D'Arcy.

## *Eastern Edwards*

*Joe Firey*

From being a straight line of peaks in its westerly portions, the Edwards group splits into three easterly branches: a southeast branch, an east branch, and a northeast branch. These Edwards peaks lie between the Monarch Icecap and the Bella Coola Valley.

In July of 1992, our party climbed the 8300-foot peak at the junction of the three easterly

branches, the first 8600-foot peak on the east branch and the first 7900-foot peak on the northeast branch. These climbs appeared to be first ascents. A good deal of the rock climbing was on reasonably firm downslab, unfortunately covered with sand and gravel.

Rob Skelly of Vancouver Island Helicopters flew us in and out of base camp near a small lake at about 6500 feet, east of the junction of the three branches. This was a pleasant campsite, but the local conies made off with two of our nylon scrub-a-dub pads; we wondered whether they were going to use these as Therm-a-rest mattresses in their burrows.

Peaks 8300, 8600 and 7900. Eastern Edwards Group, Coast Mountains.

F.As.: Joe Firey, Wes Grande and David Thomas. July, 1992.



North side of Peak 8600. Photo: Jo Firey

## *Skihist In Winter*

*Don Serl*

Following an aborted attempt from North Kwoiek Creek in January 1992 (which had also included Gord



Skihist Mountain from the east-southeast. Photo: Don Serl.

Bettenia), Darren Melnychuck and I slipped free of our jobs at the end of the finest spell of clear winter weather the coast has perhaps ever seen, and had another go at climbing Skihist this past February. A day and a half of sledding got us to Kha Lake, and six hours of hard humping got us to Antimony Lake on our third day out.

For a while on “summit day” morning, it seemed as if that was about as far as we’d get. By 6 a.m., however, the overnight storms had abated, and by 8 we set off under gloomy but improving skies. The steep slopes leading out of the basin proved stable and largely firm, so we reached the col behind Antimony Peak in decent weather only 4 hours later. As we had hoped, the southwestern slopes of Skihist were relatively baked out, and we dumped the gear and dropped into the basin below the peak feeling certain of complete success.

Chickens counted but not hatched, as it turned out. We scrambled up a spur and onto the crest of the southwest ridge expecting no difficulties at all. Instead, we found a couple hundred metres of tricky going. Darren was unable to coax himself across one an cheval into

stem section and, much to my surprise and disappointment, rather than sharing a whoop on top, I found myself cramponing up the final slopes alone. A few cold, lonely minutes against the blustery sky, and it was time to turn back down to rejoin my friend; time to head for home. I might have stood on top alone, but I sure didn’t climb it alone. Thanks for the company, Darren. You too, Gord.

Skihist Mountain. 2970 m, Coast Range. F.W.A: Don Serl, February 28, 1993.

### ***Reality Check, Yak Peak, Coquihalla***

On this new route, over fifty 3/8-inch bolts and several pins were placed. All the raps and belays except one are fixed. You need two 50 m ropes if planning to descend route; full rack of Friends #0.5 to #4; good selection of wired stoppers 1/4 to 1 inch; slings and quick draws.

Below and to the right of The Great Corner of Yak Crack is a huge pocket/ledge. Scramble easily up chute to here. Leave boots, etc., here if rapping route. Scramble up right side (easy 5th) right-facing corner to ledge. Climb starts here.

1. 4th class, two bolts. Bolts are very hard to see.
2. Mid 5th class. Up and left then to base of corner (bolt). Follow to belay, 2 bolts.
3. Finish right, then go up. Pin to right, at bottom of corner, also Tech Friend placements. 50’ runout on easy ground to bolt. Runout to Friend placements and pin. (5.4 to 5.6)
4. Easily up to steepening rock. Step up left to corner. Climb corner. 1st bolt out on left. Next on face. (5.8)
5. Follow bolts trending up and right. Then left at last bolt, to base of left corner, belay. Easier to see depressions (stances) than bolts. (Sustained 5.10+)
6. Step right and up to first bolt, follow straight up to thinnest part of roof (bolt). Follow corner to bolt on right. Step left and up to belay. (5.8)
7. Follow corner above, step left again at top of corner to belay. Route intersects Yak Crack here. (5.7)
8. Up and left across ledges, follow flakes to roof, then undercling left. Be cautious climbing huge loose flakes to the roof—the first one is very loose. Belay inside

cave. Pin under roof. Clean pro for this belay but great rock, easy to set up. Use pin. (5.8)

9. Continue up cave/chimney to open ground. Rap anchor visible on right, but go left on ledges up to anchor. (5.6)
10. Follow corner (small nuts) to ledge. Up to bolt and next corner, follow until face on lays back. Step right to bolt, up to belay.
11. Go up right to bolt. After 2nd bolt step back to corner, bolt on left. Climb to the top of the corner. Trend up and right to overlaps. Follow overlaps up and right. 2 more bolts to belay.
12. Follow corner, at top step left, to cracks. Follow to top. Climb slab, (5.9 to 5.10a). 3 bolts to belay. Hike to the top, or rap route.

#### **Notes**

- i. All raps are fixed. You need two 50 m ropes.
- ii. At last belay above chimney pitch, traverse flake ledge right above chimney to rap anchor.

By climbing Yak Crack to the intersection and continuing up Reality Check, an excellent climb is achieved with a more consistent grade. Suggest climbers on Yak Crack rap this route.

Reality Check. 5.10+, 12 pitches. Yak Peak.

F.A.: Rick Cox and Gary Wolkoff, July 18, 1992 (from the ground up). First 1 1/2 pitches completed by an unknown party.

*Rick Cox*



# The Interior

## Kootenay Mountaineering Club — Climbing Camp 1992 Irish Peaks

Steven Horvath

In 1975, we had our Kootenay Mountaineering Club climbing camp below Mount Alpha Centauri in the Central Purcells. One of my strongest memories was the view of striking granite faces to the south of us — mounts Sally Serena and Donard. We talked about returning for many years, and in July '92 were able to situate our climbing camp right below the long south ridge of Mount Donard in a beautiful hanging valley, with barely enough space between lake and the talus slopes to put up the cook tent. This was Arnor Larson country, so we were not quite sure about any first ascents, but after a look at the acres and acres of granite, we knew we were in for a great week.

The first start was rather leisurely, with a late breakfast and then a relaxed stroll to Mount Galway. From the summit, we could see the site of our '75 camp, and once again I was struck by the extent of "glacial recession in the last twenty years. What was, in 1975, a glorious 300-m glissade from the summit ridge of Alpha Centauri would now be a suicidal tumble down broken-up ice patches and rock ledges.

The day was still young, so Paul took off down the long ridge connecting us to Mount Killarney, and Hamish and I followed in due course (I had to finish my summit lunch first). This was going to be an easy day, thus all we had in our packs was food (lots of it), assorted goodies and toilet paper. Some three hours later, we were on top of Mount Killarney (the ridge was too steep to get off of). Heck, if we remembered to bring rope, we could have called quite a few parts of the

ridge 5.6.

Emboldened by our good luck, we felt ready for bigger and maybe even better things, such as the unclimbed (we think) South Ridge of Mount Donard. The start of the route was practically from the back door of our tent. This time we packed lots of courage, even rock shoes, only to carry all of it up and down via hidden gullies and ledges. We were on the summit a bit too early for lunch and in good shape to having a good look at the elusive Sally S. The guide book mentions a classic and easy traverse via a "causeway" on the ridge between Mount Donard and Sally S. The reality, as is typically the case, looked rather different. No easy walk up "causeway" and snow; rather a long series of narrow, downsloping, sand and rubble-strewn ledges exiting in a steep and dirty gully. Low difficulty, high objective hazard, too much food in our packs and clear skies — obviously this situation called for an ad hoc committee meeting, a.k.a. a summit picnic (after I got almost airborne slipping on a coating of sand while "having a look-see"). So, we sat, ate, talked and watched Brad and Ross put a fine new route up the east face of Sally S., and then carried our packs back to camp just in time for tea and cookies.

Enough of decadence; time to show our true colours. Why not do something that not only looks hard, but actually is? To prove we are real men, why not get up at the crack of dawn and "have a look" at that neat looking south ridge of Mount Koala. Make it a real sport, make it a threesome, says Paul. Great idea, says I, immediately seeing

the potential of his proposition: light pack, no Fires on my sore feet today — he can lead the whole thing, it's his turn anyway. And this he did, some 8 pitches of 5.7 to 5.8. A lovely day, it would have been perfect if I had not forgotten to pack my pipe. Following and cleaning in big boots provided just the right sporting touch. There was even a hint of an epic. Sitting on the summit we could see an almost kitschy picture: off to the east the Columbia River valley looked like the promised land, rays of westering sun reflected in oblique sheets of rain. I could almost see Charlton Heston standing in the background. Meanwhile, it was pissing rain to the south of us, snowing to the west, and was pitch dark with occasional lightning to the north.

The rappels were wet and tricky, and the rope got stuck, not once but three times, to the great delight of the person with rock shoes who was delegated to climb up and free it. We did get wet and cold and I ran out of rap rings, but we made it to the cook tent just as it turned dark and all the stars were out in the cool black sky.

As for that good Irish name, Koala Peak, my daughter and I spent several hours later in the summer looking at it from various angles from the Columbia Valley, but not even the lively imagination of an eight year old could see anything even remotely resembling a Pooh Bear in that hunk of rock.

After a rest day, we packed our gear again and set out for another apparent first ascent — the west face of Serrate Peak. Two and one half hours later we were on the top, thanks to another series of hidden gullies. The summit ridge was indeed serrated and the view perfect, so to compensate for hauling our gear up yet another scramble, we spent several hours sitting

on the summit block dangling our bare feet over the edge.

Little did we know that the real test of our skills was still ahead — the walk out. Paul and I packed our day packs (our gear was flown out a few days later with the rest of the group) and set out for the forestry trail connecting Tara Lake with the Forrester Creek road. The hike up to the Donard-Leitrim col and the walk down the Shannon Glacier (what's left of it, anyway) went pleasantly enough, but as for the trail, well, it set a new standard for the term indistinct;

"fing nonexistent", was Paul's assessment, repeated several times, I believe.

I remember walking the last few hundred feet right down the middle of the cool waters of Irish Creek, only to see Paul standing next to my truck laughing his head off. Must have been those Kokanees stashed in the creekbed for a week.

### Summary

Traverse of ridge between Mounts Galway and Killarney, 4th Class. F.A.: P. Allen, S. Horvath, H. Mutch, July 26, 1992.

Mount Donard, South Ridge, 4th Class. F.A.: P. Allen, S. Horvath, R. Netzel, H. Korn, July 27, 1992.

Koala Peak, South Ridge, 8 pitches, 5.8. F.A.: P. Allen, S. Horvath, E. White, July 28, 1992.

Serrate Peak, West Face, 4th Class. F.A.: P. Allen, S. Horvath, R. Netzel, H. Korn, July 30, 1992.

## **Mainmast Mountain Battle Range, Southern Selkirks**

During July, 1977, Graham Matthews and I climbed the right-hand rib on the north face of Mainmast Mountain in the Melville Group. The climb was about 5.6, 300 m of good granite.

On July 12, 1992, I returned to the north face of Mainmast with Brian Gould to climb the central rib. Of the three ribs on the north face, this was the second one to be climbed. There were ten pitches of climbing on reasonable granite with large black lichens, no harder than 5.7 in the centre section of the rib. The climb took only 6 hours to complete, and descent was via the west ridge to Formast-Mainmast col, and then down the north side of the col.

The climb in 1977 was not previously recorded.

Mainmast Mountain, 3028 m

North Face, Right-hand Rib, 300 m, 5.6. F.A.: Roger Laurilla and Graham Matthews, July, 1977.

North Face, Central Rib, 10 pitches, 5.7. F.A.: Roger Laurilla and Brian Gould, July 12, 1992.

*Roger Laurilla*

## **Lizard Range — A Ski Touring Hideaway**

*Pat Gilmar*

With peak elevations of less than 2400 m, the Lizard Range in Southeastern British Columbia hardly catches the attention of ski tourers from outside the Fernie-Elk Valley area.

This spiny range is unique in the southern Canadian Rocky

Mountains, for nowhere else is easy access combined with mild temperatures, an exceptionally deep snowpack (4 m), long powder runs and old-growth cedar forests. This setting has ensured the long success of Fernie's Snow Valley ski resort, 5 km southwest of Fernie, and the steady growth of Island Lake Mountain Tours (snowcat skiing) 10 km west of Fernie. Sandwiched between these two commercial ventures are numerous ski bowls that are



Peaks of the Lizard Range. Photo: Pat Gilmar.

frequented only by local ski touring enthusiasts.

Elevations along the spine of the Lizard Range are low when compared to the main ranges to the north, but spectacular peaks still abound due to the Paleozoic limestones that vthrust nearly vertical!)' upward over the soft sediments of the Fernie coal-field. The City of Fernie, along the Elk River valley bottom, is at 1000 m elevation, while the top of the ski bowls range up to 2200 m and provide powder descents of over 1000 vertical metres.

The snow zone is accessed by turning onto the Cedar Valley Road, 1.5 km south of Fernie. This road passes through Mount Fernie Provincial Park and ends in a plowed parking lot 2 km from Highway 3. From there

the road is snowcat-groomed for 8 km as it climbs 300 m up Cedar Valley to the Island Lake Lodge. Local backcountry tourers skate along this road 4 km to the Cabin Ridge trailhead which is a summer hiking trail ascending through an old growth forest. This reserve closely resembles a west coast rain forest; gigantic cedar, balsam fir and spruce trees distract one through the climb up the steep headwall above Lizard Creek drainage, and powder skiing

traverse northward for several kilometres we sometimes descend into the snowcat skiing area (Geisha Bowl) and visit Island Lake Lodge. We keep a few loonies in our pockets to purchase refreshments in the friendly comfort of the log chalet.

The return trip home from Island Lake is an easy descent of less than one hour along the Snowcat-groomed road.

What really makes the Lizard Range exceptional

for ski touring is its reliably deep snowpack and high probability of great powder skiing. Fernie appears to be situated in the mean location of frontal exchange between Pacific maritime systems and cold continental air masses. Pacific systems tracking across an apparent corridor over the Washington Plateau hit this western-most high range of the

Rockies and often result in a push/pull with arctic highs (locally known as Alberta air). The result is a Rogers Pass-type precipitation as shown by the existence of old growth cedar forests. These forests escaped a 1908 fire that destroyed Fernie and much of the Elk River valley. Most years have a maritime snowpack of 1 m along the Cedar Valley bottom, and 3 to 5 m above the 1500 m elevation. This snowpack is characterized by major fluctuations between cold snowfalls and high thermal activity during thaws. As a rule, layers are broken up by the warm wet systems that add a lot of stress during storms, with quick overloading, warming and sliding. Persistent weak layers are usually torn out by this high stress and locals

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stay home or ski Snow Valley Resort during these direct action avalanche activities. The high thermal energy creates an often uniform snowpack of mostly well-bonded rounds. After these major slide cycles and subsequent snowfalls, the locals put on their packs and head back into the Lizard Range. Massive complaints about the "Pineapple Express" that hit us for several days quickly fade as new snow covers our recently stabilized slopes and we snort powder on our favourite runs.

Daily backcountry avalanche forecasting is provided by the Snow Valley Pro Patrol for ski tourers leaving the ski area. These area predictions generally hold true for tourers skiing northward along the Lizard Range. We also often compare notes with the operators of Island Lake Mountain Tours for additional information.

After the main slide cycles that occur several times every winter, indirect action hazards on surface hoar, wind deposits and depth hoar are usually localized and not widespread, as in many other regions with shallower snowpacks in the Rocky Mountains.

Powder skiing is often exceptional. For instance, in 1990, the Snow Valley Pro Patrol recorded 5.1 m of snowfall from January 22 to February 13. This snowfall was not your typical west coast glop, but the much lighter 0.03 to 0.16 specific gravity variety. Sorry, but I cannot help but brag that we have one of the few areas in the southern Canadian Rockies with 1000 m descents through snorkel-type powder right at our doorsteps. Come and join us some day.

## ***The Findlay Group***

*Steve Horvath*

In the summer of '91, Paul Allen and Hamish Mutch spent

the "perfect week" at Lone Cairn Lake (beneath Mounts Lees and Clutterbuck). Quite unable to climb anything else other than the most obvious and delicious first ascents (see CAJ, 1992, p. 61), they resolved to return. I made sure that family work commitments would not prevent me from joining them this time, so, there we were, camped high up on the one flat spot on the height of land running all the way southeast from Mount Pambrum to Mount Lees.

Our first objective was Mount Pambrum. It had been climbed only once before, by some of our friends from the Kootenay Mountaineering Club in 1964 from the Pork Creek Valley to the north. The mountain looks rather impressive and quite out of place, a huge glacier-hung chunk of the Rockies transplanted into the Purcell granite country, steep and isolated.

Lucky for us, the most obvious line was right above our camp, a steep-looking south ridge, red at the bottom with a vertical, white section on top. The red stuff turned out to be alternating bands of broken and solid quartzite, offering some 2 hours of interesting scrambling. The steep, white stuff was like the crystalline marble on Mount Sir Sanford. Having got this far, the weather, with customary perfect timing, started to change. The sun disappeared just as Hamish, the only one to carry Firés, started the first lead.

Seconding was fun, as we had the advantage on him — a swift kick with a boot, and voilà — instant foothold. Instant they were, as they disappeared into the gloom below as we stepped on them. After some three pitches of this good stuff, we unroped, left our gear under a rock and scrambled up the long, serrated summit ridge. This cunning plan, coupled with the deteriorating weather, made it impossible to keep the tradition

of a leisurely summit lunch. But heck, there was nothing to see anyway. Luck was with us, though, as the skies did not really open until we were safely below the worst of the downclimb. From there, it was just another Gore-Tex fieldtest day.

Next day we set out (at a usual Paul Allen alpine time) for the striking twin peak south of our camp. It was granite, all right, but the long ridge connecting the east and west summits was wet and mossy, and the clouds attempted actual physical contact with us several times. Still, this day it started to rain only after we got back to camp. Paul suggested the peak should be named "The Steeds," after our KMC friends, Jack Steed (a member of Mount Pambrum first ascent party) and his son Jamie, who died in an avalanche in Kokanee in the 80s. A much needed rest day helped me to start recovering from months of long days and too much time on the road; things just don't seem to get any easier as one gets older.

Now it was time for the peak immediately south of The Steeds. Pleasant route-finding just to gain the long connecting ridge and then, finally, technical granite! Thanks to my successful recovery I easily beat Paul to be first lead, but the fink just walked straight past me on the belay and proceeded to lead the nicest piece of the ridge without so much as an "excuse me." Hamish just sat there and laughed. We left our gear on a grassy ledge and stepped into a climber's dream — a long, exposed scramble on an unclimbed granite peak under sunny, summer skies.

We were planning on a grand tour, just continuing on and on, but, as usual, what looked like a straightforward scramble from the camp proved to be anything else but that, especially without anything to rappel on. So, next year.

We still had unfinished business though, so on our last day we climbed the west peak of The Steeds. Approach was somewhat cumbersome, up and around and back and forth, but the day was sunny, meadows stuffed with flowers and the granite clean and white. By then we'd discussed just about anything under the sun and agreed on solutions to most of the world's problems, except names of the peaks. So we are suggesting a name for the ridge itself— Memorial Ridge. May the peaks on it remained unnamed.

### **Summary**

Mount Pambrum, South Ridge. F.A.

Freeclimb up to the steep white rock near summit, then 3 leads of 5.4 (exposed, crumbly rock), then scramble to summit. Interesting rappels.

"The Steeds" (first peak south of Mount Pambrum on the long ridge running between the former and Mount Lees):

East Summit, F.A. Freeclimb up Northeast Ridge.

West Summit, F.A. Freeclimb of South Ridge.

Unnamed (second peak south of Mount Pambrum), F.A.: Northwest Ridge, 3 leads, up to 5.5.

All ascents by Paul Allen, Steven Horvath, Hamish Mutch, third week of July, 1992.

# The Rockies

## Rethinking The Clemenceau Icefield Traverse

Bob Enagonio

Sunday afternoon, March 15, 1992 — a classic late winter day in the Rockies, cool and breezy, but with a brilliantly blue sky ablaze with sunlight that packs some genuine warmth. Far off in a remote corner of the range, five skier/climbers are perched on its fourth-highest summit. You can't see Mount Clemenceau from any road, anywhere, not even the logging roads winding through the Columbia Valley north of Golden. It is about as remote as a mountain gets in the central Rockies, and so is climbed infrequently, especially in the winter. Yet today, a somewhat unlikely group has assembled on its summit, hoods drawn against the wind. Al Massin and Steve Bertollo have been around and done lots of skiing and climbing together. I have too, but usually with other partners; this is my first major trip with them. And Simon Thompson and Michelle Ackermann, imports from Australia, are seeing some Rockies' sights that most locals never see. What recently made the mountain suddenly accessible is also what binds us together: it takes five or six people to make the ski-plane flight from Golden reasonably affordable.

After our flight the previous day, and after a few hours to ferry our supplies to the Lawrence Grassi Hut, we had jumped onto the big mountain of the area right away, seizing the opportunity presented by the favourable weather. The normal route on the west side of the mountain is technically easy, being essentially skiable right to the summit. On the descent, we were treated to corn snow

on a lot of the steeper slopes because of the intense sunlight on the southwest aspect. It all added up to a truly enjoyable day in the mountains, with the return trip from the hut taking about 11 hours.

So, one of the major objectives of the trip had been accomplished. Once again I had a grudge to settle with a previously attempted ski traverse (see CAJ, volume 75, page 68), and the others were easily convinced to come along on the ski-out to the Columbia Icefield. Monday morning, in continuing cold and clear weather, we shouldered the big packs and headed eastward. We traveled about 40 km in the next two days, using a relatively easy route via the Apex Glacier to the Chaba Icefield, then around the south side of Chaba Peak to the upper reaches of the Athabasca River drainage and finally to the Columbia Icefield southwest of Mount King Edward. This is a beautiful high traverse, almost entirely on glaciers, with striking views of the large Clemenceau Peaks (Tusk, Clemenceau, Tsar), and later across the valley to Mount Alberta and the Twins.

On Wednesday morning, day three of the traverse, we skied easily across the icefield south of King Edward, approaching the technical crux of the route near Mount Columbia. Here we had been forced down and out the Bush River valley a year ago. This time we certainly had stable snow conditions, which is an absolute necessity here. Our objective was to negotiate a new route through the major cliff band that extends from the south side of Mount Columbia all the way down into the forest on the east side of the major Bush River tributary. A system of gullies and steep slopes works through this band at its lowest point, starting at about G.R. 734701 on map 83-C/3.

This spot is quite obvious when viewed from the west in the good visibility, which is another necessity for travel through this section.

We stayed high on the glacier at around 2500 m, descending gradually through a maze of crevasses, but stayed above the main icefall. Then we descended to pass below the first band of west-facing cliffs. Here there is a steep moraine to cross, and then we continued to approach the main cliff band, again keeping as high as practical until right below the wall. A descent south along the cliffs leads to the gully which gives access through the band. This last kilometre or so travels over a fascinating field of ice boulders which seems to be a reconstituted glacier formed by avalanches from the ice cliffs

above. You're not in the direct path of the falling ice here. It seems to avalanche further to the north and then flow down along the wall as a glacier, but still in the form of sérac debris. It would be interesting to see what this looks like in the summer, without the mask of winter snow.

We chose the right-hand of the two obvious gullies that break through the lower cliffs. This first part is steep, though climbable on skis, but the next section, where the cliff makes a "V" shape, is best walked. A series of steep climbs and traverses eventually gains a rib which leads straight up to the final cliffs, where a traverse right and then up soon leads to much more reasonable terrain. This whole section is no place for even a small avalanche



Final slopes of Mt Clemenceau looking NW. Photo: B. Enagonio.

or any sort of fall because anywhere after the start there is always a cliff band below. However, this route does avoid descending into the trees, working instead down a steep-walled canyon, crossing the river to get to the normal "hidden ledge" route. The lowest elevation we reached was about 1880 m, a good 500 m higher than the normal route.

After the third (eastern-most) cliff band shown on the map, there is a long high ridge extending south that has normally been crossed at a 2550 m col about 6 km southeast of Mount Columbia, followed by a long climb back to the Icefield "trench". In scouting the route from the west, we had noticed a couple of ramps sloping up left toward the main Columbia Icefield closer to Mount Columbia. These ramp glaciers looked to be a short cut. About mid-afternoon, at the beginning of the bench, we decided to wait until the morning to do the rest of the climb, as it was beginning to whiteout and the skins were balling up with clods of snow in the near 0° C temperatures.

As luck would have it, we awoke to a total whiteout storm. Fortunately, Al had gone on a scouting trip after dinner when the visibility was better and we were able to move. We used the highest ramp, but the next lower one appears to be negotiable as well. The ramp was narrow with open crevasses, but a prominent rock wall above made a good "handrail" in poor visibility. At the top we experienced a few anxious moments traversing a steep, loaded slope. Shortly thereafter, some route-finding dilemmas in the whiteout caused us to resort to the rope. But gradually, we sorted out where we were and set a compass bearing for the trench, still roped together. An attempt to climb Columbia was now out of the question. We ended up going all the way across the Icefield to the

Athabasca Glacier by compass. Once we lost some elevation on the headwall, though, we came out below the clouds and were able to unrope and ski down like normal human beings. A last, miserably wet snow squall overtook us before we were able to snag a ride to Lake Louise.

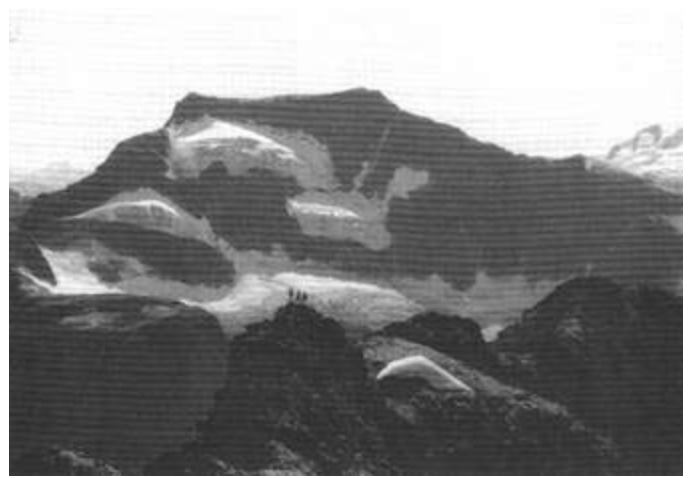
With this new variation in the route, the Clemenceau to Columbia traverse is an excellent high-level route without any descents into low valleys and trees. It covers a distance of 70 km between 1880 m and 3080 m elevation, and can be expected to take 4 to 6 days in the absence of major weather delays.

## *The Grizzly Group At Longstaff*

*Glen Boles*

Over the years, curiosity has always gotten the best of me. On just about every mountain that I've ever climbed, if I haven't seen the country on the other side of the mountain, I've yearned to go and explore it. These areas were never forgotten, but simply put on the back burner, and sooner or later they too were visited.

While climbing in the Mount Robson area in years past, I've looked to the north over the vast tract of mountains, intrigued by the scene, and hoped one day to ramble and climb there. While pouring over maps, names like Mount Sir Alexander, Mount Chown, Mount Bess, Jackpine Pass, Carcajou Pass, Mount Longstaff and the Holmes River kept popping up, making these places seem all the more mystical. This personal mystique was fueled by the fact that very few other climbers had ever ventured into this vast area. Time has a gentle way of encouraging you to do the many things you long to, and I've been very fortunate because the members of our group seem to possess enough



On P 2515, with 2790 and Wilfrid Laurier behind. All photos: G. Boles

curiosity to nudge time a little harder and to impel us to visit some of these remembered areas. In 1984, while waiting out bad weather for a helicopter lift into the Resthaven, we took the opportunity to drive the logging road up Small Creek (two valleys west of Mount Robson) to have a look at Mount Longstaff and its surrounding peaks. We were impressed, to say the least: at the end of the valley, the summit of the mountain was 2000 m above us.

This past summer, we decided that we would make one of our trips to the Mount Longstaff area. Rising east of the headwaters of Small Creek, south of the head of the Holmes River and east of Mount Phillips, the east and north reaches of the mountain are covered by the 25 square km Longstaff Glacier. Several smaller peaks fringe the glacier.

Our party consisted of all the "Grizzly Group" members: Don Forest, Gordon Scuggs, Leon Kubbernus, Mike Simpson, Jim Fosti and myself. We flew with our favourite chopper pilot, Gary Foreman of Yellowhead Helicopters, out of Valemount. Leon and myself went in with all the gear on a beautiful Friday evening, and we found a terrific spot on the height of land between the Holmes River and Small Creek just outside of the Robson Provincial Park bound-

ary. We were located above a nice lake at 2040 m, sheltered from the west by the last trees, about five kilometres west of Carcajou Pass. The other four members of the group drove up Small Creek where they were picked up by the chopper and deposited with us half an hour later. Gary chattered off into the dusk and we worked into the darkness to set up camp. The moon soon came over the ridge to give us plenty of light, seeming to be a good omen for our stay; goodness knows we were due for some good weather the way July had doused us.

Saturday: The next day we worked to organize our site. Then, shortly after noon, we set off to the west over meadows, side slopes, talus and finally some scrambling to top out on the ridge west-northwest of camp. More scrambling northeast along a sharp ridge brought us to the high point (2515 m). Under a cloudless sky we wanted to take in our surroundings so that we could make up our minds on what was logical to climb in the time we would be there. To the southeast, Mount Robson, Mount Phillips and Mount Whitehorn dominated the view, while in the other direction, the Mount Chown Group, with Mount Bess straight to the north across the Holmes River valley, sloped off to the northwest.

Sunday: We left around 6



Emperor Ridge of Mt. Robson from Mt. Longstaff

a.m., travelling southeast over meadow and talus slopes to gain the tongue of the Longstaff Glacier. This spilled through a gap in the ridge south of our camp which supported the north margin of the glacier. Mount Longstaff was our primary objective, as it would without question be the highest peak we would climb, and we wanted to see what lay to its south while the weather held. Once on the glacier, we moved in a southeasterly direction. We were forced to climb two steps on the glacier-ice pushed up by ridges which ran out from the peaks north of Mount Longstaff. Eventually we came to the east ridge of Mount Longstaff around 11:30 a.m. The most reasonable place to gain the ridge, because of the moat at its foot, consisted of a 10 m band of vertical black rock leading to a 15 or 20 m snow slope topped by a small cornice. After several false starts on the rock which was overlain with running water, we sat down to eat lunch and to ponder the solution. Don insisted on having a go. Despite thin, wet holds he somehow

made it look easy.

Once on the ridge, which was another step in the glacier, we donned crampons, and on steepening ice, gained elevation quickly. Staying on the ice as long as we could, we scrambled over loose boulders to regain the east ridge. Over the next hump, we had to put crampons on again to mount the last hard ice slope to the summit. As on the day before, we were treated to a great, but slightly different, view of Mount Robson, Mount Phillips

and the ice face on Mount Whitehorn. We built a cairn and left a record. To our knowledge, no one had trodden the top since Gilmour, Holway and Palmer made the first ascent back in 1916.

After a long stay in the nice, warm sun, we retraced our steps down the east ridge. At the point where we gained the ridge earlier, we used two ice screws to anchor our one long rappel down to the glacier. We arrived back in camp at 7:30 p.m.

Monday: We took it easy in the morning, roaming the meadows near camp. Around noon I sauntered along in the meadows north of camp, deciding to climb to the ridge farther north. At the last meadows below the ridge, I noticed movement on the summit and, sure enough, the others were already there. By the time I arrived, they had already vamoosed south along the ridge to another summit, but in their wake, on every hump, they had left grotesque-shaped cairns built from the many long, thin rocks that lay everywhere on the ridge. I sat

chuckling to myself on the top; the cairns looked like strange beings from outer space coming up the ridge to meet me. From this vantage point, there were great views of the Holmes River below, Carcajou Pass and the mountains north of Berg Lake. I lingered long in the sun.

Tuesday: We took a rest day, taking photos and enjoying the solitude of the meadows near camp.

Wednesday: We had planned to go for the two small, unclimbed peaks north of Mount Longstaff, but it started to pour at the precise time we were to get up, so we rolled over and went back to sleep. Later, the weather began to improve, so we decided to cross a pass in the ridge to the north of us and make a circuit around the little group of small peaks to the northwest. Approaching the pass, we took shelter from a wet snow squall. We then crossed and descended the north side of the pass to a long meadowed ridge that ran for about four and a half kilometres to the north-northwest along the west side of the Holmes River. A cool wind blew from the northwest. We decided the circuit did not look feasible, so three of our group opted to descend to an interesting looking lake west of the ridge. Don, Mike and I hiked to the end of the meadowed ridge to get a view of Bess Pass

to the northeast.

At the end of the ridge, to our utter surprise, we found ourselves looking down at a camper parked in a cleared-out spot with clear cuts to the east of us along the Holmes River. It seems there is hardly a place untouched by man anymore.

Thursday: It dawned clear and cold, so we were away at 6:30 a.m., taking the same route that we had taken to Mount Longstaff, cutting up through the slot on the snout of the glacier. Here, Don and Gordon left us to climb the ridge to the east. The remaining four of us continued up the glacier, then turned west and continued on to the saddle between unnamed peaks of 2850 m and 3035 m north of Mount Longstaff. From here, the rock of the north ridge of Peak 3035 m didn't look very inviting, so we decided to crampon straight up the ice of the north face. We first threaded some crevasses, then followed along a large crevasse to an almost level area, and then, on ever-steepening snow, gained the bergschrund. At first, we thought this would create a problem, but with the aid of an ice screw on the upper side of the 'schrund, we climbed a short steep ice pitch to a rocky saddle. This gave us access to the southwest side of the mountain where we scrambled up loose rock, reaching the



Looking southeast from 2650 ridge to Robson, Whitehorn and P 3035.

summit at 11:30 a.m.

Taking in the view, we savoured the perfectly clear morning. Then we set about building a cairn. It was hard to tell the exact high point, as the summit was a well-rounded ridge, like the top of a tent, about 40 m in length. When we were ready to leave, I noticed a trilobite on a piece of the loose shale, and the hunt was on: we found many scattered around the summit. We left at 1:15 p.m., descended the same route, and then set off for Peak 2850 m.

This summit was a kilometre and a half away to the northwest. A long, wedge-shaped, undulating ridge covered by the glacier, led to the summit at its far point. The very gentle, sloping ridge actually rose in tiers. In two places, fairly large, deep, blue lakes were located on the glacier, dammed in by the western fringe of rock. We got to this summit at 2:30 p.m. and were happy to have another first under our belt. Our next priority was to build another cairn. Forty-five minutes later we set off for the valley, arriving back in camp at 5:30 p.m.

This had been a superb day. Conditions were perfect: not a cloud, great views, great companions, and, above all, the freedom of it all. Records were left in both cairns and we proposed to call the 3035-m summit Mount Carcajou, and the 2850-m, Undulation Peak.

Friday: The wind changed during the night from the usual westerly flow, around to the east, and it turned very cold. The peaks were covered in snow and it flurried all day. During the afternoon we hiked down to a lake towards Small Creek where we got into a great patch of huckleberries; guess whose face was blue?

Saturday: We had 2 cm of ice in the water bag. It was  $-5^{\circ}\text{C}$  when we got up to another cold, dull day, but we resolved to do something. In the afternoon, we

climbed a 2575 m point to the northwest of our camp where we built another cairn.

Sunday, August 22: We were up early and broke camp. Then we threw the frisbee to keep warm; not so easy when you play with mitts on. It was  $-8^{\circ}\text{C}$  when the chopper picked us up at 10 a.m.

Observations: It was another one of our great weeks in our own great mountains. Being prime grizzly country, we were quite surprised to see no recent signs of any bear activity. We noted, however, that there were very large colonies of marmots. The only sign we saw of big game animals were very old caribou tracks. We built cairns and left records on five true summits. The climbing is endless, for farther north there is a multitude of peaks, perhaps not as high, but challenging nonetheless.

## *The Southeast Face Of Mount Sir Douglas In Winter*

*Eric Trouillot*

“Hey man! I’m sure you don’t have anything better to do this weekend than to hang out with us!” This voice behind me — I turn around just in time to intake the breath of a professional beer drinker. In a fraction of a second my eyes close and my tactile senses commands my lungs to stop anymore inhalation, a reflex I learned as a soldier. Unconsciously, I reach for my gas mask but unfortunately, it takes me a couple of seconds to clear the tears from my eyes. Jeff Marshall is standing in front

of me, the source of my sudden hangover in his right hand. John McIsaac, wide grin across his face and eyes shining with innocent happiness, is leaning against Jeff’s left shoulder. This was in December of 1990 at the Royal Duke in Calgary during a Calgary Mountain Club beer-drinking session. These two guys had just approached me with the intent of convincing me to be a pack horse to haul some gear up a climb that had been attempted so many times in the winter that the offer wasn’t the least bit funny. “Get this Eric: the Elzinga-Renshaw route on the south-east face of Mount Sir Douglas has, burp, never yet been climbed in the winter!” I wasn’t sure I should accept the challenge, but I would do anything to avoid further conversation.

January 1991: the weather seemed stable, only marginally windy on the ground, but we knew this meant very windy at the Robertson Col. We therefore decided to ski up the French Creek to find ourselves a nice sheltered camp on the east shoulder of the Haig Glacier. Someone had broken trail through 30 cm of new snow, making it much easier for us crawling under big

loads. Unfortunately, this trail was made by skiers unaware of the meaning of “sensible route finding.” They took us zigzagging through some really dense trees and steep side-slopes. Buckets of sweatin’ and cursin’ and losing each other in tree wells got us behind schedule and wasted. We eventually found a good site to set up camp, rest and refuel our bodies for the climb the next day. A few jokes and stories later we were fast asleep. Wake up call at 3 a.m. Too bloody cold outside of the sleeping bag! The skies were clear of clouds, the snow crystals reflecting the brightness of the moon like far-away city lights glittering at night. Our tracks had disappeared and the packs were hiding under 30 cm of new snow. It was  $-25^{\circ}\text{C}$ . That’s cold; only real men climb under those conditions. We didn’t feel like it was going to be a good enough day to get buried by an avalanche that would very likely release just on the initial approach to the base of the face. No arguments; everybody agreed on staying in bed to talk about the “things” that male climbers talk about when there’s no climbing to do. After a while we got up and decided to end



Jeff Marshall near the summit. Photo: Eric Trouillot.

our outing by climbing up to the Haig-Robertson Col and then ski down the Robertson Glacier, doing a circuit instead of fighting with the trees again in the French Creek nightmare. Even with big packs you can enjoy a good powder run.

That same year I had decided to go back in there to at least do this route in the summer. Bob Enagonio seemed game, so off we went with a 45 m, 11 mm rope, 4 pins, a few wires and Friends. We thought we could downclimb most of the east ridge on our descent, so we thought one rope would be enough! Apart from the fact that we got a bit off-route, taking an early ramp on our way up and getting to the summit late, we also realized that the descent was too steep and loose to downclimb. So we rappelled, 14 times on our single rope using up all the pins and old nuts on the first 6 or 7 stations, then we had to improvise and use the fine art of properly placing chockstones and jammed knots in cracks and finally, on the last few placements, we had to rely on snow and ice bollards. Needless to say we got down to the valley in the dark and, of course, we had to spend an extra night out because we couldn't find our mountain bikes in the bush.

A year later, in January, 1992, John McIsaac and I returned for another winter attempt, and this time we went the sensible way, up the Robertson Glacier. After just a few hours we were at the col. Unfortunately the typical weather was present. This place is known for its very strong, almost continuous howling winds and poor conditions; explanation enough for all of the unsuccessful winter attempts on this climb. Neither one of us slept that night in our small tent. The winds were so strong we were bounced against the sides of the tent all night. A few times I thought the poor shelter was going to give up the fight

and leave us to the mercy of the ugly storm. In the morning nothing needed to be said; we packed up and left for home.

Thursday, March 5, 1992. "Tell me Eric, what's the best way to get slapped across the face by a French girl in a Parisian bar?" There I was minding my own business, trying to melt snow and get dinner going, while Jeff Marshall is harassing me with his endless search to increase his knowledge about women, sex and how to get both of them. My mind is racing while I'm fighting to concentrate on the pasta alla carbonara so as to maintain a respectable image of my French heritage. Eventually I end up burning water. The conversation is flowing quite easily this evening, the food turns out OK, the weather's great, no wind. We're just a couple of happy campers enjoying the true values of life at the now familiar Robertson Col. We're trying not to keep our hopes too high as we know the odds are on our side this time. Next morning at 6 a.m., still no wind. After a quick breakfast, we're on our way to the base of the climb, headlamps guiding us through the darkness. At the bergschrund we rope up and start travelling together, swapping leads up the couloir. The snow's holding well and soon we pass the ramp where Bob and I got off-route last year. As we reach the rock, Jeff looks around for some old protection he'd left behind on a previous attempt. The boy knows the route quite well after having almost summited a few years back, but today he can't find anything. That's all right though, because Jeff's technique is simple, safe and fast. He believes in running the rope out with little protection then places a bolt at the belay. On to the next pitch. All is going well until he turns around to me on the top of the fifth mixed pitch: "I have to get rid of a big

shit. Lower me a few meters." So I lower, and he starts some weird gymnastics to pull his pants down, trying to keep his harness on. Bombs away! Unfortunately "it" doesn't go very far and an odorous updraft nearly knocks me out of my crampons, making me almost let go of the rope. A flashback brings me to the Royal Duke episode. This Dude deserves a good nickname celebrating his gas — like M&M — for Methane Marshall. I recover my wits and find myself on the summit ridge. Nice exposure on this knife edge! I don't remember it being that steep in the summer. Snow can definitely change the aspect and difficulty of a rocky ridge; however, after travelling a distance, riding the snow arête in some spots, we're on the summit. A Snickers bar to celebrate, a look around at our fantastic view, pointing out familiar peaks, and few summit pictures brings us to the next objective: the quest for a cold beer. After searching for an anchor for half an hour, M&M just throws some tape around a rock and decides to start the descent. Less than 3 hours later we're at the col packing up to head for the bar. Dry throats and the use of our bolts at the rappel stations made our descent very fast.

As we're packing up, I realize that this wasn't a desperately hard climb. It was simply like a lot of other climbs: you've got to be there at the right time and be tenacious. Success does have to do with luck sometimes, but if you don't believe in luck, don't be strictly a weekend climber: you've got to be flexible, and go out there when the conditions are right.

## ***Mount Babel, Free: The End Of Innocence***

*Carl Mclellan*

I sit in an airplane seat somewhere between Calgary and Ottawa trying to shake the adrenaline rush that has refused to relinquish its hold on me. I try to think clearly, to focus on what had transpired that day; however, all I can manage to do is to jump from one to any of the other emotions experienced during the 33 hours since we set out to climb the East Face of Mount Babel. The emotions of that day are indelibly etched into my being.

Upon waking one hour later than was planned, the pace with which Jeff set out to make up lost time was a far cry from what now seems a casual stroll to the base of Mount Yamnuska. By Rockies' standards, the approach to the base of Mount Babel is a short one, but Jeff's pace served notice to me that this was to be the real thing; no more time taken for instruction, no more time taken for a clearing of the mind. This was new ground for Jeff as well, and there was a difference in the way he carried himself, a difference in attitude. If I am to aspire to this level of alpine rock, it is an attitude I must adopt as well.

The route up the East Face of Babel is fairly direct, even to my untrained eye. Our path of travel was dictated to us through a strict line of cracks, chimneys, and ramps. I caution those climbers who would take lightly the 5.6 to 5.8 ratings given to many pitches on this climb. The climbing is both unnervingly steep and the exposure is quite literally breath-taking, as I would find out as the day progressed. I now possess a much deeper respect and appreciation for the abilities and brashness of those climbing pioneers of the 1960s.





East face of Mt. Babel. Photo: T. Auger.

The first half of the climb went by with workman-like precision and it wasn't until we had been on the rock for over nine hours that it began to occur to me just how serious this climb was beginning to become. I remember feeling tired from the constant weight of my pack, and thinking to myself that I wouldn't again take going into Jeff's office at the Co-op to bug him about setting a date to do a serious climb lightly. "Be careful of what you ask for, Carl," I told myself, "you may find yourself getting more than you had bargained for."

Many of the pitches of this climb required that the second dismember the belay station and simul-climb to facilitate the lead climber reaching the next good stance. I remember one pitch in particular, where it became expedient for me to climb at a faster rate than Jeff in order to escape the firing line for some significant rubble. I reached a ledge where I felt safe, only to realize with shock that there was a considerable amount of slack in the rope between Jeff and me. The protection he had placed, as far as I could see, appeared alarmingly sparse, and my feeling of shock quickly turned to one of anxiety

as the slack inched away. Upon hearing a shouted "secure," I was awash with an embarrassed sense of relief (like a person coming safely to rest after a four-wheel skid down an icy road). I felt little solace in the fact that Jeff knew nothing of what had just transpired, and I wondered if alpinists were constantly dealing with these types of situations.

In two more pitches, we found ourselves on the ledge that the first ascent party had used as a bivy site. We were making good time. It was 6 p.m. and the guide book indicated that we were three pitches from the summit. Concerns of making my flight at 10 the next morning were easing as Jeff set out on pitch 15. The pitch looked steep, and as Jeff progressed, it became clear that this indeed would be the crux of the climb. Jeff's strained voice, as he talked himself up the traversing crack, began to cast doubts in my mind that I could second everything he could lead. As Jeff continued to traverse up the crack, tying two pitches into one, I struggled to cast doubt aside and focus on centering myself on the task to come. Until this time, I had not realized how far the traversing crack went, and that I was in for a considerable pendulum should I part company with the rock face.

Somewhere out of sight, the ringing of an alpine hammer on a pin signaled that Jeff had reached the belay stance. On this pitch I would not have the comfort of visual contact with Jeff. I would be alone in my attempt to "pull" this pitch, and in looking at the traversing crack continue out of sight, I took little comfort in the fact that I was the second. In response to the barely audible, "On belay. Climb when ready," I forced myself to steady my breathing, and tried to shut out the inner voice that nagged at me that my resolve was not one

hundred percent.

The first difficult sequence of moves required that I attempt and retreat three times before feeling comfortable with passing the point of no return. Once this move was made, there would be no reversing without a fall. The move accomplished, any feeling of satisfaction was short lived as I pulled into a slightly over-hanging off-width crack that was just wide enough to stymie any attempts at a sound fistjam. I was off the climb before I could yell "falling." As I swung away from the rock, the rope became tight for a brief moment, and as I weighted the No. 4 Friend Jeff had placed, it popped. Onward I swung as the Friend spiraled down the rope, slamming into my helmet as if someone had precisely guided it there.

After penduluming back and forth for what seemed an eternity, I came to rest 40 m down the rope, 10m from where I had been, and 2 m from the cliff face. The adrenaline rush eased, only to be replaced by swirling vertigo. I found myself roaring with rage and frustration at how this fucking piece of rock had so cruelly chosen to expose my weaknesses.

A familiar voice brought me out of my helpless rage, asking if I was all right. Reality rushed in; I must get back to the rock face. My first attempt was to try and swing back to the face. I remember seeing in my mind's eye a three year old on the back yard swing-set mimicking his older siblings in a vain attempt to soar as they so easily did. I found myself chuckling sardonically at the absurdity of what I was attempting.

I yelled for Jeff to lower me to where I could get back to the rock. I then attempted to pendulum back into the traversing crack. This endeavour went on for about five minutes until I began to visualize the ropes 45 m up, sawing across an edge, and I

immediately gave up trying to get back to the face.

In hindsight, I have vowed to never again climb without prussik cords, as I then found myself. I thought about trying to hand-over-hand my way up one of the 9 mm ropes; however, when I wrapped my hand around one of them, I realized the futility of such an endeavour. As I spun lazily, trying to fathom what I was going to do, that familiar voice came drifting down from above saying, "This is not a good place to bivy, Carl. We are not going to make it unless you get up here." These words of inspiration pointed out how serious our situation was becoming. I needed to free myself from this self-doubt and frustration. Removing some webbing from my "cleaner-biner" and the safety cord from my alpine hammer, I fashioned a pair of prussik lines. Both were too short and made the rate of ascent numbingly slow.

After what seemed an eternity, I was back on the rock half-way to the belay stance. I looked at my watch and was alarmed to see that it read 7:30 p.m. Prussiking was going much too slowly and it became expedient to begin climbing again. The climbing was difficult, and was compounded by my fatigue and zero headspace. This is what it must be like to be on kilometre 30 of a marathon. Jeff's voice was close now, and I found myself feeling embarrassed to face him because of my lack of preparedness, and the length of time it had taken me to reach the belay stance. When I did reach the belay stance, I could tell Jeff was frustrated, but the need to press on far outweighed any need for him to vent these frustrations.

The last pitch was a blur. Upon topping the climb, I could not muster any of the satisfaction or sense of accomplishment that Jeff was clearly exhibiting. We now



James Blench on Mt. Babel. Photo: T. Auger.

had half an hour before dark to find a bivy site somewhere on the backside of this mountain. I suppose it may have been fatigue that prevented my enjoying the view of Moraine Lake or any of its ten peaks. Maybe it was the realization that the wind was blowing right off Fay Glacier and it would be a chilly bivy, or perhaps it was the fact that I would be missing my flight to Ottawa in the morning. I felt empty. If this is what doing long alpine routes left a person feeling, Jeff could have them.

Air turbulence brings me back to the present, and as I gaze around the cabin at the concerned faces of my fellow travelers, a sense of overwhelming satisfaction pervades my being. Air turbulence, hah! The events of the past day have proven to me that I am wholly alive, and that no matter what transpires from here on in, I have truly lived.

Thank you, Jeff Marshall, for including me in the first free ascent of the East Face of Mount Babel. In a small way I feel I have played a part of climbing history in the Canadian Rockies. Thank you, Anke, for having the strength to allow me to play

in the mountain. I feel no more adrenaline. My mind is still.

Mount Babel, East Face. 5.11.

F.F.A.: Jeff Marshall, Carl McLellan, 1992.

## *Riptide Repeated*

This famous route was first climbed by Larry Ostrander and Jeff Marshall in April, 1987. The route was described in Albi Sole's guidebook *Waterfall Ice*, as a 5-pitch horror, sporting sustained technical climbing between belays on otherwise unprotectable ice. During the winter of 1990, Barry Blanchard and Guy Lacelle attempted a second ascent, but had to decline after the second pitch.

Last winter, Francois Damilano and Serge Angelucci successfully completed the first duplication of Riptide. Two days later, Bernard Mailhot and Philippe Pibarot repeated the route. The first bolted belay set by Jeff and Larry was covered with ice, so we had to belay on three scary screws driven half-way into rotten ice. The second bolted belay was obvious on the right. On the third pitch, the traverse to the left on snow mushrooms was one of the most technical and exciting sections. The third belay was partially covered and very difficult to find. The fourth belay was obvious on the left, just before the last pitch, which is probably the crux.

The main problem on this route remains the protection. Most of the time, protection is impossible because the ice is too thin or too brittle to support screws. And when the ice becomes thicker, you generally have to drive at least 10 holes before finding an acceptable site for the screw.

About the question of deciding whether Riptide is really a technical Grade 7 or Grade 6+: Riptide seems more difficult psychologically

than technically. A fall on this route would have dramatic consequences, especially if the belay is set on screws, as was the case with the first and third pitches on our ascent. Physically, this route is not so strenuous because continuous vertical sections are not very long, at the most 15 m. On the other hand, even if not completely vertical, the ice is so brittle that each placement is uncertain. Riptide offers all the features of modern ice climbing and should become a classic route in the future. Further ascents are needed to confirm the grade of the route as either WI 6+ or 7.

Thank you to Jeff and Larry for this wonderful adventure.

*Philippe Pibarot*

## *Where There*

### *Is No Fear:*

## *Slipstream, Solo*

*Robert Cordery-Cotter*

"Hard pounding this, gentlemen.

Let's see who will pound longest."

— The Duke of Wellington at Waterloo

Slipstream is an alpine waterfall of massive proportion. Formed by runoff from the icecap of Snowdome, the 925 m route was first climbed by John Lauchlan and Jim Elzinga in 1979 over a period of two days. When Lauchlan was killed in a solo attempt on Polar Circus only two years later, Slipstream was to remain as his masterpiece, his legacy.

The tragedy of Lauchlan's death was to plague Slipstream for years to follow. By the winter of 1989, when I first began to seriously consider an on-sight solo, four climbers had been consumed by the monster. Two, climbing unroped, had been swept off by an avalanche.

A third, climbing alone, had fallen near the top of the route, tumbling past a horrified pair of climbers below. A fourth, in jubilation of having completed the climb, wandered too near the summit cornices and fell through. His body has never been recovered, and remains entombed on the glacier.

Yet, despite the legend of the climb, the weather that can at times beset the Icefields, and the objective danger of the route, Slipstream is one of the finest extreme ice-routes the Rockies has to offer. The combination of spectacular setting, purity of line, technical challenge and superb climbing make the route an extremely appealing proposition.

In the winter of 1991-92, I on-sight soloed three Grade 5 waterfalls in a two-week period. Feeling psychologically prepared for the potentially radical nature of approaching the climb alone, I waited for a weekend of good weather to make the drive to Canada. The week of March 8, 1992 was to see substantial snowfall followed by a period of clear, but extremely cold, Arctic weather. Somewhere to the north of my home in Washington was a cold front with my name on it. Somewhere to the north hung Slipstream.

I stood in the freezing dawn of a Canadian Rockies' winter morning. The desolation of the Dome Glacier offered no protection from the brutal wind, and as I sipped from my thermos, coffee scalded my tongue. Above me, the dawn brought the features of the Slipstream into view: first the monstrous séracs guarding the exit, then the sustained blue ice of the headwall, and finally, as the sun rose higher behind the mountains to the east, the long, rolling lower section of ice bulges and snowfields. With a slow, dull roar, avalanches of snow from the storm the previous day swept down

the route, with the sickening thudding noise of the larger chunks delayed by the distance from me as they pounded the ledges in their path.

The Arctic front that had assured a clear day for my ascent also foretold a cold one. By my thermometer the temperature was -25°F, and the cold slipped through my clothing and the soles of my boots. I thought of all the times I'd come up to Canada to do this line only to watch avalanches rake the route, or just sit and never even see the climb in whiteout conditions.

I was here today, not because I felt particularly talented as an ice-climber, but rather, because after two and a half years of Slipstream-watching, I had at last convinced myself that I would not be killed on the route. I would solo the brute in fast time, and return home to my wife and daughter, where I probably belonged all along.

As the light improved, the large cornices that overhung the route became evident, appearing like ornaments of a gothic cathedral. A persistent plume of spindrift was coming off the ice-cap, indicating a ferocious northerly summit wind. The cold made up my squirming mind; before I shivered myself into retreat, I dumped out my sack and repacked, taking only two changes of handwear, goggles, a 100-m, 6-mm rope, rappel cord and three titanium ice-screws — the last of seven I had traded for an old down jacket so long ago.

I bid my ski poles and thermos good-bye, and began breaking trail in knee-deep powder snow up to the start of the route.

The snow was soft and bitterly cold. The insulated gaiters I had were the only thing between me and frostbitten toes that day. The metal heads of my ice tools burned like coals in my hands, even through heavy, pile-lined gauntlets with liner

gloves. My breath formed ice in my beard and on the collar of my jacket, and I plodded slowly upward.

Slipstream begins with an inviting Class 3 bulge; the fun comes higher up. I was careful not to smash my tools on the underlying rock and was soon clanking up the snowfield above. Despite the cold, the sun that found me on the climb was perceptibly strong. I stopped to open the vents in my windsuit to cool off, and noticing some enticing ice-runnels off to my right, made for them. The route swept right, up an enclosure, and I hooked on, enjoying the firm, white ice. Another snowfield followed, and I advanced on a very imposing column of blue ice, the start of the real climbing.

The pillar was as smooth and as hard as a column of marble. I beat my way up the lower section with savage blows, and the ice-counteracted by steepening to vertical. This was supposed to be Grade 4 ice, but the cold and altitude made it feel harder. The angle would ease off above, but not for nearly 50 m. On the snowfield above, I was apprehensive that more of the same lay in store, but I was by now committed. Another section passed uneventfully, then a third. I encountered a steep headwall that appeared easiest and most protected from avalanche danger along its right edge. Several metres into it, what I thought would be a moderate groove between two pillars turned out to be a chandeliered slot between two brittle sun-shaded monstrosities. As I hunted for placements, a shard of ice exploded from the chandeliered column on my left, blasted free by an aberrant blow from my tool. I ducked to permit my helmet to deflect the falling ice, but the shard balanced, momentarily, maliciously on its pedestal end. I glanced back up as the massive fragment toppled forward, striking me

square in the mouth like a steel fist. Dazed, I reslotted the tool in its former pock-mark, acutely aware that I must not lose control. Drooling blood mixed with saliva from my battered mouth, I lowered my head, breathing deep the cold, raw air, pushing back the dizziness and nausea of trauma.

I was 700 m up Slipstream, alone on a winter's day. As if to punctuate the seriousness of the situation, a torrent of spindrift coursed down over me, piling up in my collar and behind the lenses of my sunglasses. The cold sank into me like the blade of an executioner's axe; my despair threatened to kill me.

I had needed that placement; my need now was even more acute. Simple climbing was over; blood had been drawn, mortal combat now ensued. I struck at the fragile columns like they were living, breathing entities — entities who opposed my very existence.

The grotesque heads of my ice tools twisted and flashed in the air over me like metal kites, their jagged black blades wounding the living ice. Numbness turned to a pulsing agony as sensation reclaimed my torn lower lip and gum. Beneath me, my crampons found the tortured wounds in my foe left by my tools. My body was tense, bending like the mast of a wooden ship. Through the maelstrom of spindrift, I cramponed over a bulge, finding shelter beneath an ice-glazed bulge of rock. Placing all three of my tools securely, I removed my small sack and worked quickly with numbing hands to replace frozen gloves with dry ones. After cleaning ice chunks and deposited spindrift from my hood and collar, I swapped my iced-up glacier glasses for eyeglasses and ski goggles. Sucking a cherry cough drop, I probed the ragged laceration in my lip with the tip of my tongue, checking also for loose teeth. Although

the injury would add character to my immediate post-climb appearance, it was not serious.

I determined to go on. From here, the climb would ease, I conjectured. The terrain did mellow, but bulges gave way to a long snow slope overhung by truly formidable cornices. To either side of the route, bulging snow-mushrooms perched like gargoyles atop towering pillars of black limestone. Tortured currents of spindrift blew off the summit ice-cap above, to perch atop these snow gargoyles as twirling snow-devils, in a brief and hellish copulation.

Feeling strong, I moved rapidly up the snow ramp, passing under and turning the summit sérac barrier. The ramp climbed to the juncture of the right-angled corner of the northeast and north faces of Snow Dome. There, the climber must turn onto the north face to gain the summit plateau. I reached this place and was confronted with a most hideous sight: the sérac formed a sharp edge, like the keel of a great ship stood on end. Peering around this corner revealed the gray, vertical bulwark of sérac ice crowned with a meter-long cornice. I blinked stupidly at this improbable edifice; I could not imagine how to reach this feature, much less surmount it. The wind thundered around me as I weighed the proximity of the summit with the distance to the earth below.

So I began.

I slapped my crampon pied-a-plat onto the spine of sérac ice. Driving the shaft of my left tool into the snow bulge on the corner, I struggled to place my right tool in the gray ice around the corner. Here I finally found signs of passage of other parties in the previous weeks and they had completely pitted the ice out. With indescribable contortions, I set the left tool and stepped around, 1200 m from the ground below. The wind was truly awe-inspiring,

it bent my body like a bow as I stood against it. Huge plates of gray ice blew out, glanced off the otter-slide of sérac ice and spun off into the vast void below my crampons. Like Ingmar Bergman's knight Max Block, I was engaged in chess with Death. I must weigh every move, lest Death bid me dance.

As I came within striking distance of the cornice, I undid the wrist loop of my right tool with my teeth to release my hand. Leaving the other tool in the ice before me, I yanked out my third tool, fitted the wrist loop, and reaching up, slashed at the soft, white underbelly of the cornice. The cornice detonated into a swirling mass of snow crystals. Again I struck, and again, the strain in my legs and left arm communicated urgency. With another cut, a brilliant light streamed through the cornice, the sun and sky above. Several more blows and a gap as wide as my shoulders existed. I planted the tool into the rim of the sérac and moved up. My eyes came level with the summit plateau. I took Death's knight. I reached over and struck into the summit plateau with my tool. My legs began to tremble from fatigue as I struck again deeper, this time finding ice. Grabbing at my three tools, I emitted a roar and pressed upward, crampons scratching at the ancient ice. Into the sunlight onto the summit plateau I thrashed. Checkmate. Death loses.

In every direction the mountains fled like a sea of stilled whitecaps. I staggered away from the edge, turning my back finally to the incessant wind. That which I had feared was behind me. Two and one-half years of fear for this route had evaporated.

When I had realized I would not die on the Slipstream, I had overcome the physical obstacles in a mere four hours. I smiled a slightly damaged smile and careened off across the wind-

blown summit plateau in the direction of the descent gully.

An account of a solo ascent of Slipstream, northeast face of Snowdome, Canadian Rockies (925 meters, Grade IV, WI 4) by Robert Cordery-Cotter. March 8, 1992. Four hours and twelve minutes.

## ***Better Late Than Never***

*Jeff Marshall*

The summer was slipping on by, and due to an excess of kayaking, it appeared that climbing had been seriously neglected. I thought it funny that this new distraction was occupying so much time — funny because the last number of years had been so devoted to climbing. Interestingly enough, I didn't seem bothered by this little realization: though it could become bothersome if enough people remind you of how inactive you've become. Not pulling the plug completely, I felt compelled to explore an avenue of our beloved sport familiar to me though obscure to most. The addict's need for a solo injection had once again demanded some attention.

Bruce Keller and John Lauchlan's creation, The Maker, has always fascinated me. At the time of the first ascent, this route was, without question, horrendous. Even by today's standard, rest assured, it is still very intimidating. The Maker is six pitches of steep, sustained, runout climbing on impeccable rock; an absolute masterpiece.

A common event for folks at the store who work late on Thursdays and Fridays is to put in a little recreational time before work. Every so often the budgeted time for one of these pre-work fiascos is, of course, miscalculated. This unfortunate event sometimes happens en masse, thus leaving us with a hopelessly understaffed store and a temporarily unbalanced

manager.

It turned out that Jeff Everett and I were going to involve ourselves in one of those days. We left at a ridiculous hour that only a hardened alpinist could be happy with. The familiar walk up to Yam was quite fresh and surprisingly pleasant. We parted company along the base trail. Jeff was off to climb Red Shirt, and I was headed into CMC valley with my faithful four-legged companion. We hiked down through the woods on obscure game trails, crossed the stream, and wound our way up to the base of the climb. Although I had climbed very little that year, it was the third time I had been to The Maker. The first two times were planned to learn the route. I had to gear up quickly and get on with the climb before common sense crept in and started asking the pertinent questions. One last look at my little dog and a few reassuring words that I would be back soon, and I was off.

The Maker took on new dimensions that day. There was no comfort in reaching the sparsely-placed bolts, only a little grin when I thought about the sizeable runouts that I moved through. The climbing demanded ultimate care, with an emphasis on precision. The air and space that surrounded me were there only in the periphery, serving as a quiet reminder of the danger of breaking concentration. If one is to solo, it is imperative to be aware of these two separate realities, and know how to control the fine line between them. One can become the other so terribly quickly.

An hour or so later — it always seems like an eternity — I finished and had captured one of my greatest climbing fantasies: to solo The Maker. To be a wide-eyed 16-year-old kid. To spend the years to patiently ferment and mature. To experience sheer terror and incredible elation. To live the

reality of seemingly unrealistic dreams. That day would forever be a precious memory.

As I approached the truck, Jeff held up a questioning thumbs up. I gave him the affirmative back. "Right on, man. Right on," was his response. "Good one, son?" I asked. "It was great. You?" "The best, buddy. Just the best." We both stood there smiling at each other, each lost in his own experience, but sharing in the celebration of the other's. We were separate beings joined by the strong bond of kindred souls. We were brothers.

It was 2:01 p.m. With the hour-long drive ahead of us, we were officially 1 minute late. Oh well, what can you do? "Fools," I believe, was the official response from management.

## ***Peaks North Of The Bow Corridor Near Canmore***

*John Martin*

The peaks lining the north side of the Bow Corridor near Canmore are familiar to every southern Alberta climber and have been well travelled for decades. Yet just beyond this first row of peaks lies an extensive area that is very seldom travelled by mountaineers, except those bound for the well known Mount Fable. Although the peaks in this area are only modest in terms of elevation and mountaineering interest, they do offer: ready accessibility, being on Canmore's doorstep and only an hour's drive from Calgary; better weather than the ranges deeper into the mountains; relatively low snowfall, making them good early and late season destinations; and distinctive scenery.

There are virtually no records of ascents in this high country area, and in 1991 my curiosity about it was piqued to the extent that I resolved to explore all three of the major

avenues from the Bow Corridor into it — Carrot, Cougar and Exshaw creeks — with the expectation of finding some unclimbed peaks within day trip distance of the highway.

My first expedition was up Cougar Creek. After an hour or so of walking, the trail fades out but the going remains easy as far as the junction with the northwest fork of Cougar Creek, where the route to the Carrot-Cougar col splits off to the left. The main valley ahead now becomes choked with huge boulders, necessitating some strenuous scrambling. Beyond, the valley opens up and the three main peaks at its head — the East (9200 feet), Middle (9100 feet) and West (9000 feet) “Cougar Creek Peaks” (as I call them; they have no official names) — gradually come into view. The east and middle peaks were climbed from the Cougar Creek side in 1974 by Campbell, Davis and Vermuelen, and I had originally hoped to extend their trip to include all three peaks. In the end, though, I decided to miss out the East Peak, as it is separated from the Middle Peak by one of those inconvenient slanting cliffs so common in the Front Ranges, and instead found a virtually scree-free route up the Middle Peak. From its summit, an easy descent to the west, followed by entertaining scrambling over and around minor rock towers, took me to the top of the West Peak. Apparently this had not been climbed before. A short descent to the west led to the head of a snow gully, which provided an expressway down to the northernmost headwaters of Cougar Creek. The upper part of this narrow valley was completely choked by coalescing avalanche snow cones, even in mid July. The impressive south wall of the valley is steep and high enough that it avalanches frequently during winter and spring and then blocks out the sun until

near mid-summer.

Lured there by the contour map’s promise of a tower-like 9000-foot peak in the vicinity, I next visited Exshaw Pass, at the head of Exshaw Creek. The 9000-foot peak was there all right, a couple of kilometres to the northeast, but, perhaps predictably, it more closely resembled a scree slope than a rock tower. Still, it looked reasonable to climb the peak and then traverse south along a high ridge before descending to Exshaw Creek at any one of several points, so I decided to continue.

After a short descent through trees I reached the watercourse that drains the southwest side of the mountain, a truly wild and seemingly untravelled place. From the top of the watercourse, easy slopes capped by a couple of anemic little cliffs led to the summit, which, not surprisingly, had no cairn. This unnamed mountain (I call it Exshaw Peak) commands an unexpectedly extensive view, both into the mountains and out over the prairies. Unfortunately, a fast-moving electrical storm interrupted my enjoyment of the panorama and I was forced to scurry for lower elevations, abandoning the ridge walk portion of the trip.

I saved Carrot Creek, with its seemingly endless fords (actually there are only 25), for last. From the top of the divide between the Carrot Creek and Lake Minnewanka drainages I struck out northeast from the trail towards “Carrot Peak” (my name again), a north-south trending ridge with separate summits of 9000 feet and 9100 feet. After a short walk through open woods I continued up easy slopes of grass and then rock, eventually reaching the northwest ridge at 8500 feet. This provided a fine, scenic ridge walk to the lower north summit, which proved to be uncairned. Continuing on, I reached the south peak after

an unexpectedly tricky detour on the east side of the ridge to avoid a cliff band. There was a cairn here, but no record of ascent. An easy descent to the south led to the flower-decked 7300 foot col between the South Ghost River and Carrot Creek. At this point the afternoon was well advanced and the sensible thing to do, as it turned out, would have been to head west into the Carrot Creek drainage, following a hiking route back to the main trail. Instead, though, I decided to continue south to have a look at an unnamed 9200 foot peak that overlooks Astral Lake. I ended up climbing the peak by its easy but toilsome southwest slopes. “Astral Peak,” as I think of it, had apparently not been ascended before. After descending, I crossed a low col to the west to reach the headwaters of Carrot Creek’s southeast fork. This turned out to be a real untracked wilderness of bush, steep banks and fallen timber, but all things come to an end and I was able to get back to the highway just at dark. The Carrot Peak portion of this trip is very pleasant, but the Astral Peak portion has little to recommend it.

Some interesting trips remain to be done in the area. In the Cougar Creek drainage, the trip described previously could readily be extended to include all three of the Cougar Creek peaks, although it would be necessary to bring a rope to negotiate the cliff between the Middle and East peaks. Two other possibilities exist starting at Exshaw Pass. On the west side, it appears reasonable to climb East Cougar Creek Peak by the north ridge. From there it may be feasible to traverse south some 12 km along a high ridge past Mount Fable all the way to Highway 1A in the vicinity of Grotto Canyon. East of Exshaw Pass, an easy spur leads to the top of an 8700-foot peak, from which it appears possible to traverse a

12-km ridge south all the way to Exshaw. Alternatively, this traverse could be started 2 km farther north at Exshaw Peak.

## *For the record: Stanley Peak*

To clarify the uncertainty on page 80 of Sean Dougherty’s Selected Alpine Climbs in the Canadian Rockies: the Central Couloir on Stanley Peak was first climbed in early September, 1980, by Gregg Cronn and Bob Milko. It involved straightforward 50° ice, with a direct escape through a short rockband.

*Bob Milko*

## *Rockies’ Ice Update*

*Joe Josephson*

With additional information supplied by Allan Massin, Dave Thomson, Larry Stanier, and Brian Webster.

This update covers new routes from the spring of 1992 and the first half of the 1992/1993 season. In this period, several trends have become obvious. Primarily, people are searching with a new eye for thinner lines. The mixed revolution began in earnest last



Bruce Hendricks on early season ascent of Amadeus. Photo: Joe Josephson.

season with Joe Buszowski and Troy Kirwan's stellar classic, Mix Master. Joe was at it again this year with the excellent test piece, Shampoo Planet on Mount Rundle. As the mixed spirit has become contagious, parties have been free climbing or aid climbing to move above free-hanging icicles, or worse yet, have been climbing onto the daggers themselves.

Secondly, dedicated souls arc travelling further afield to search out solitude, wilderness and virgin ice. People have commented for years, "just think what might be found one drainage off the road," but actually moving away from the road has only just begun to happen. These more remote areas are slowly being tapped, largely because of a third trend: more people.

This year in particular, there seemed to be a greater number of people doing new routes, with many others interested in winter climbing in general. In the past, a local climber usually knew all the activists opening routes and could afford to "wait" to grab a first ascent. Now, many parties are "doing something new," only to find a rap sling from the week or even the day before.

The 1992/1993 season's weather started out as a repeat of last year, with a wet fall and mild temperatures producing a flurry of activity as early as mid-October. However, the joy was short lived, for by Christmas, a killer Arctic front parked itself over the range for close to four weeks. Explosively brittle ice and desperate snow conditions were much the norm, though the Front Ranges had a good year, with the Kananaskis, David Thompson and Ghost areas producing generally fine ice conditions. Gems like Amadeus and Silver Tongue Devil formed for the first time in many years. In a strange twist however, some typically prolific areas like Mount Wilson produced very

little ice with many routes being completely dry.

As soon as the cold spell snapped, several panics sprang to action and produced many outstanding efforts. Notable efforts include the Blanchard/Robinson, Acid Howl, and Ice T. In October, several wishful locals tossed a 150 m rope off the top of The Terminator, hoping to seed the first complete formation of the route for only the second time, but the unanchored rope snagged on rocks to the right. Nonetheless, the route came within 15 metres of forming, giving the best chance for an ascent in years. Not willing to let an opportunity pass, Jeff Everett, Serge Angelucci and Al Massin gained the route from behind and sieged the free-hanging dagger by aid climbing and swapping leaders on the wildly overhung pitch. After fixing a rope, Everett returned with Karl Nagy to climb the upper pitches. [See the accompanying article by Jeff Everett.]

Many of the write-ups below are limited by the information available and may contain inaccuracies or be incomplete. Over 100 new routes have been opened since the last published guide, and with a new guidebook underway, any useful information on new or existing routes would be greatly appreciated. Information can be sent to: Rocky Mountain Books, 106 Wimbledon Crescent S.W., Calgary, AB T3C 3J1.

#### **Smith-Dorrien/Spray Trail**

The Chalice and the Blade. 100m, Grade III, WI 5. F.A.: Grant Statham, Joseph Josephson. November 1992.

This route is located due right of the route Ranger Creek (82-J/14 205247). The first 10 m climbs thin technical ice and moss to a nice steep Grade 4 pillar which leads to a ledge. From here, two lines diverge to top. The Chalice and the Blade climbs the half metre-wide,

free hanging cigar on the right. Climb beside the rock for 15 m, then traverse around the pillar to thin ice, then follow easier-angled ice to the top. If one takes the easier, left-hand line, the route is called The Chalice and The Spoon (WI 4). Walk off to the right and traverse back to the base. Beware of the potential for extreme avalanche hazard.

Passage. 140 m, Grade IV, WI 5. F.A.: Andrew Brash, Serge Angelucci. November, 1992.

This route is visible from the road just south of the Burstall Pass parking lot and the route Ranger Creek. It is very high on the mountain and there is some confusion whether it lies on Mount Murray or Mount Smith-Dorrien. It has been known to form as early as August in some years. Begin the approach through the trees and into the large avalanche bowl to the left of the route. Some interesting slabs or thin climbing may be found getting to the base.

The Drip At The Centre of The Universe. 400 m, Grade V, A2, WI 6. F.A.: Keith Haberl, Larry Stanier. February 27, 1992.

East face of Mount Birdwood, the obvious line that runs to the summit. The climb was originally attempted by Larry and Grant Statham in the fall of 1992, and involves a long waterfall turning into a snow gully.

#### **Kananaskis**

Santa Claus is a Jerk! 150 m, Grade IV, WI 5. F.A.: Al Massin, Serge Angelucci. December, 1992.

Located on the East face of Mount Kidd. 200 m of 5th class lead to a ramp. Follow this to the right and gain the ice. (This route was previously confused with Chief Five Star, which in fact lies in a gully on the left outlier of the east face and to

the right of the huge gully-cum-bowl which contains Sinatra Falls and Saddam's Insane.)

Cryogenics. 100 m, Grade III, WI 5. F.A.: Ty Trand and Adam Ferris, February, 1993.

Located to the right of Santa Claus is a Jerk. This thin climb does not always form, and should be avoided during times of high avalanche hazard. Depending on the water level, it may be possible to ford the Kananaskis River. If not, take the Terrace trail from Kananaskis Village, then ascend slopes to the base of the climb (2 hours). Two short steps of Grade-III ice lead up to the foot of the main falls, an narrow curtain of thin and chandelier ice, which rears to vertical in the upper half (55 m). A short walk leads to the second pitch; 10 m of thin ice in a narrow avalanche-scoured groove. Rappel route.

#### **Elbow River**

Pipimischen. 100 in, Grade III, 5.6 A2, WI 4. F.A.: Jeff Everett, Glenn Reisenhofer, Bob Lee. November, 1992.

Walk up Canyon Creek from the Powderface Trail for 45 minutes, then go north for 20 minutes to the waterfall. The climb is identified by a rarely-forming pillar topped by 50 m of ice. Climb rock in a shallow groove starting 50 m to the left (5 bolts), to a bolt belay. Continue on ice to the top. Rappel the route. Reported to be a worthwhile day. [See accompanying article in this issue.]

Pitches of Eastwick. 140 m, Grade III, WI 3. F.A.: Jeff Everett, Bob Lee, Jim Mamalis, Alex McConnel. November, 1992.

Another route found in the same area as Pipimischen. The route consists of thin smears up east-facing slabs with scant protection. "Very alpine."

#### **Ghost River - South Ghost**

The Hooker. 200m, Grade III,

WI 5. F.A.: Joseph Josephson, Ken Wylie. December 1992.

When entering the Ghost River Valley, two bowls are seen on the east face of Orient Peak. To the south is the immense Biff Drip. In the bowl to the north are four possible lines: on the left is The Joker; to the right is The Hooker; 20 m to the right is an icicle that's never formed; and, on the far right side is found the spectacular, but rarely formed, Candlestick Maker. The Hooker begins with 55 m of rambling ice to a chandeliered "bumper thing." The next, crux, pitch hooks its way through a short section of overhanging icicles to a much-needed rest before gunning 25 m up vertical ice, where it eases off. Another two pitches of rambling ice and snow leads to a pleasant 10-m, 85° step. Rappel the route. Many of the middle pitches can be traversed around on scree ledges.

#### **Bow Valley - Old Fort Creek**

DeMaio's DeMentia. 200 m, Grade IV, WI 3+. F.A.: Stephen Ritchie, Steve DeMaio, Joseph Josephson. November, 1992.

Park at the Yamnuska parking lot and follow the trail over the hogsback to the Charlie Simpson hut in the CMC Valley. Continue straight up the other side of the valley, then traverse around through the trees on a relatively flat bench just below the crags. Continue north, then drop down into the flat cobblestone-strewn valley of the North Fork of Old Fort Creek. At the head of the valley are two forks; this route is easily seen in the right hand one. Allow 5 hours. Some very steep pillars can be found at the bottom of the bowl but can be turned on the right. Continue up 200 m of easy mixed climbing to the base of the route. Three pitches of moderate ice lead to a nice curtain of 85° ice at the top. A nice route for moderate climbers seeking privacy.

Rappel and downclimb the route.

Campbellian Overture. 180 m, Grade IV, WI 3. F.A.: Joseph Josephson, Stephen Ritchie. November, 1992.

Approach as above, but found at the head of the left-hand fork. Frank Campbell is the only other soul we know who would walk this far for a so-so piece of ice. Similar to DeMaio's DeMentia but the "hard" pitch is followed by cruiser slabs to the top. It is possible to walk off the first pitch to the right.

Frenchie's Pillar. 10 metres. Grade III, WI 3+. F.A.: Stephen Ritchie, Joseph Josephson. November, 1992.

A soaking wet free-standing pillar down and left of the above route. Walk off for 100 m to the left and traverse back to the base.

#### **Canmore Corridor**

Wangle Dangle. 40 m, Grade-III, 5.7, WI 4. F.A.: Dave Thompson, Dave Chase. December, 1992.

Easily seen from the Trans-Canada as a wide section of green icicles on Grotto Mountain. Located on the rock band above the Burnco slash and close by the new sport climbing venue, Bataan. Allow two hours approach. Be wary of trespassing on Burnco property and don't be obvious. Climb Grade 2 ice to the right of the largest icicle for 10 m, then traverse left on downward-sloping ledges and shattered rock for 15 m to the main curtain. Traverse onto the free hanging dagger and continue to the top. Rappel from a tree on top.

The Southern Wind. 250 m, Grade IV, WI 3.F.A.: Barry Blanchard, John H. Tiencken Jr. October, 1992.

The left hand of two obvious routes visible from the

TransCanada near Dead Man's Flat on the north face of Mount Loughheed, this route may have been done by Dave Scott and Jim Franken years ago. Three possible approaches: bushwhack up Wind Valley from Dead Man's Flats (the deadfall is Grade VI+!); hike up to Wind Pass and around to the Windtower/Loughheed col from the Smith-Dorrien (about 2 hours); or buzz in by helicopter to the same spot in 6 minutes. From the col scramble down a gully on the north side into the basin. Hike down for 1 km past some anemic smears to the routes on the right. Beware of wind-loaded slopes below the col. The first crux pitch can be rather thin and technical; the next pitch climbs a short pillar on fun, narrow ice. Continue up easier angled ice for 100 m to a snow gully. One of the best Grade 3 routes in the Rockies. Either rappel the route and walk out 5 hours to Dead Man's Flat or continue up snow to the ridge and traverse easily right below the north face of Loughheed back to the col.

Hurly Bird. 50 m, Grade IV, WI 4. F.A.: Grant Statham, Troy Kirwan, Joseph Josephson. October, 1992.

Located 200 m to the right of the Southern Wind. Mellow ice leads to a pleasant free-standing pillar of excellent ice. Rappel the route. It may be possible to continue to the ridge as mentioned above.

#### **Mount Rundle**

Trans Canada Iceway. 300 m, Grade IV, WI 4+. F.A.: Al Massin, Serge Angelucci. November, 1992.

This almost hidden gully is found high up on Mount Rundle just above the Park Boundary. Look to the right of the huge buttress above the cut-line and on the shorter wall tucked back on the left side of the bowl. Mountain bike along the trail from the Canmore Nordic



Dave Thomson on Wangle Dangle. Photo: Dave Chase.

Centre, then hike up the cut-line to the base of the huge buttress and traverse around to the gully. Allow about 4 hours approach. This fine route offers 4 pitches of narrow, very Scottish ice. A short pillar at the very start provides the crux. To descend walk off into the huge bowl to the right. This route would be certain death in bad avalanche conditions; best done early in the year. A second ascent and a third (solo) by Barry Blanchard has confirmed it as an excellent route.

Postscriptum. 50 m, Grade III, WI 5. F.A.: Al Massin, Serge Angelucci. December, 1992.

Twenty metres to the right of The Terminator can sometimes be found two parallel pillars seeping from the rock. The route-takes the right hand smear. Approach as for the Terminator. Allow up to four hours in deeper snow conditions. A great, if sometimes cold, location and a good alternative to its nasty neighbour.

Sea of Vapors. 165 m, Grade V, WI 7. F.A.: Bruce Hendricks, Joe Josephson, March 1993.

An amazing line that formed in a matter of days during a tropical chinook in February.

It pours out of a right facing corner to the right of The Terminator and ends just to the right of Postscriptum a one pitch free standing column. The first pitch ascends Postscriptum to a bolt and hanging belay. The crux second pitch traverses right on thin ice and up vertical to overhanging bulges on incredibly sustained technical ice with a quarter to two inches of ice anywhere on the pitch. The next 80 m was steep with slightly thicker ice. All belays and protection except two pieces were from rock gear (no bolts). The name comes from a landmark on the Moon.



Thin ice on Sea of Vapors. Photo: Joe Josephson.

Shampoo Planet. 190 m, Grade III, 5.10 or 5.9 AI, WI 3. F.A.: Peter Arbic, Joe Buszowski. November, 1992.

This devious route is found in the next gully left of Christmas Present. Walk several hundred metres past the double bend in the Banff Golf Course Road and look up an avalanche path to the route. The route can be seen as a low angle smear of ice that ends over a steep wall 20 m off the ground. It is basically invisible after a snowfall or before the snow skiffs off the slabs. Hike up to the route in about an hour. Best done early in the year before much accumulation and while the temps are conducive to rock climbing. The first pitch starts up thin ice and mushrooms to a right-trending corner and two pitons left by a retreating party. The next 30 m may have little or no ice, requiring hard rock climbing and dry tooling in the corner. Some frozen moss adds a welcome purchase to the baby-smooth slab. Take lots of gear, including Friends, wires and 10 to 12 pitons. Two of the three ascents to date required back-cleaning. Belay on a small stance where the corner arches severely to the right. The next, slightly easier pitch steps left under a loose block and sketches up a groove to the

right end of a horizontal moss seam. Handrail across the seam using your ice tools and slinging moss horns for protection for 10 m to the ice smear. Cruise happily up thinnish but easy ice for three pitches, with a 30-cm wide ice seam and a Grade 3 pitch near the top. Walk off as for Christmas Present.

#### Lake Louise Area

The Tease. 85 m, Grade III, 5.9, WI 5. F.A.: Karl Nagy, Jeff Everett. March, 1992.

This route is located two hours up Paradise Valley, on a quartzite cliff of Mount Sheol. Pass over the Saddleback/Sheol col; the climb is located on the left. Climb up difficult rock to an unformed icicle. Continue up steep ice for another pitch. Awesome views of the North Face of Mount Temple. Rappel the route.

“Blanchard/Robinson.” 1000+ m, Grade VI, WI 5+. F.A.: Barry Blanchard, Ward Robinson. December 1992.

This is a significant alpine addition to the East Face, Mount Temple. Found between the Big Step on the East Ridge and the Aemmer Couloir, it follows the largest gully system to the base of the Black Towers. Approach up the Moraine Lake Road, but only in times of low avalanche

hazard. Several pitches of moderately hard ice lead to a very steep and strenuous pillar about halfway up the gully. Several pitches higher take a right-hand fork in the gully up some thin ice. Take the obvious traverse line around the buttress back into the left-hand gully, thus avoiding unformed ice on the left side. Bivi sites can be found by traversing along quartzite ledges to the left. Pound up deep and usually horrible snow conditions to the East Ridge. A descent down the Aemmer Couloir to Paradise Valley may be possible. In good style the first ascent party continued up the standard East Ridge and climbed to the summit under high winds and a full moon—“very Himalayan.” They continued down the normal route and slogged back across Moraine Lake in 24 hours after leaving their bivi below the Black Towers.

#### Radium Highway

Tinkerbell. 150 m, Grade III, WI 4 or 5. F.A.: Dave Chase, Dave Thompson. March, 1992.

A two-hour ski up the drainage north of the Stanley Glacier trail brings one to three parallel smears; Tinkerbell is the middle of these. It offers some interesting thin ice problems. Pitons may be useful for the first belay. The second hanging belay is off a natural rock thread, and the third off ice. Either rappel the route or traverse to the left hand smear and make one rappel off a bolt anchor.

Sinister Street. 50 m, Grade III, WI 4. F.A.: Dave Thompson. March, 1992.

The left hand of the three smears. Climb a rope length of short columns and some bad ice. A bolt anchor on top.

#### Stanley Glacier Trail

French Reality. 150 m, Grade III, WI 6. F.A.: François Damilano, Philippe Pibarot.

March, 1992.

From the Radium Highway a number of ice smears can be seen at the mouth of the Stanley Glacier trail on the massive “Headwall.” In a typical year there are three major veins of icicles below the major ledge splitting the cliff. This wild route spills out of the hole to the far right at the mouth of the valley. The first pitch climbs a narrow and thin vein up and left to the base of some large splattered mushrooms. Climb past the mushrooms to the upper pitch. It starts with a thin pillar and continues up sustained vertical ice to a large hole with a flat floor of ice. Rappel the route.

The second splattering of icicles can be found about 100 m to the left and have never been known to form into a feasible route.

Acid Howl 320 m, Grade V, WI 6+. F.A.: Joseph Josephson, Scott Backes. January, 1993

Five hundred metres past French Reality the third vein originates with three separate lines just above the snow ledge, then pours into two huge parallel free-standing pillars, the right of which never forms. Another freestanding column is found near the bottom. Climb a short step of bad ice and snow to the base of the first pencil. Climb very unconsolidated overhanging ice for 30 m, requiring major amounts of cleaning to find hook placements and psychological protection on the first ascent. Another two pitches of Grade 3 ice and snow end at the base of the two parallel pillars. Climb this tremendously sustained and technical pitch for a full 50 m to a belay. Continue up a short step to a ledge. Here the first ascent party traversed to the right hand pillar and continued up a brittle Grade 5 pitch. Another overhanging Grade 6 section could be found straight up the left pillar. A choice of three 20-m smears leads to the





Joe Josephson starting the crux second pitch on Sea of Vapors. Photo: Bruce Hendricks.

top. Rappel the route.

The following two routes were done after a freak fall season Arctic front. They can be found to the left of the north tongue of the Stanley Glacier above the prominent, treed bench. They are chimney climbs in the true Scottish fashion and very seasonal. They may be combined with a route on the left side of Mount Stanley's north face to provide for a great but long alpine day.

**A Gentleman's Day Out.** 200 m, Grade IV, 5.8 mixed. F.A.: Troy Kirwan, Barry Blanchard. September, 1992.

On the front of the buttress to the left of the North face. The first ascent party continued up the Y-Couloir Route and traversed across the summit.

**An Elderly Man's Day Out.** 200 m, Grade IV, 5.7 mixed. F.A.: Barry Blanchard, James Blench. September, 1992.

To the east of the Outlander Couloir route on Mount Ball,

underneath the col on the far left-hand buttress.

#### **Yoho - Field**

**Kronenbourg.** 80 m, Grade IV, WI 6. F.A.: Remy Billon, Jean-Pierre Mottin, March, 1993.

Located just right of Carlsberg Column. Rarely formed, the first pitch is thin and unprotectable steep ice, followed by a free-standing pillar of brittle ice. The second pitch, with a short vertical section, leads to the top. Rappel the route. A thin climb named after a thin French beer by thin Frenchmen.

#### **Emerald Lake**

At the back of the Emerald Lake Basin can be found the following two routes. Follow the creek at the back of the lake to pass between The President and The Vice President. The area is subject to high avalanche hazard.

**Mr. Misty.** 50 m, Grade III, WI 4. F.A.: Jeff Everett, Dave

Campbell. March, 1992.

One pitch of steep ice. Can be quite rotten late in the year. Walk off.

**The Royal Trent.** 250 m, Grade IV, WI 5. F.A.: Jeff Everett, Dave Campbell. March, 1992.

One curtain of steep ice followed by a short snow pitch. Continue up a pitch and a half of steep ice to the top. Make two rappels and then walk off.

#### **West Yoho**

**The Tonsil.** 90 m, Grade III, WI 3. F.A.: Dean Lister, Jeff Everett. 1992.

Found 4 km west of the Yoho Park Gates. Follow the creek north to a major fork and go left. Located around the corner from the French Maid. 82N/7 229788. Look for "an obvious big fat climb with big fat avalanche hazard."

#### **Icefields Parkway**

**Le Lezard d'Or.** 250 m. Grade V, WI 6+. F.A.: Francois Damilano, Godefroy Perroux and Claude Blazy. March, 1992.

This route is a variation to Riptide. During the 1991/1992 season considerably more ice formed on this route than in previous years. It is believed this route banks out right and continues to the sérac barrier. Normally, Riptide ends in a seam or hole just short of the glacier.

**Aerial Boundaries.** 200 m, Grade III, WI 5+. F.A.: Joseph Josephson, Bill Pelander, Nancy Pritchard. February, 1993.

This great route starts in the gully about 150 m right of the Lower Weeping Wall. It is probably the best route on the Wall. Climb a pitch of technical ice up the gully into a small alcove. The next Grade 5 pitch climbs out of the alcove and up a steep pillar to a hanging belay. A short rambling pitch leads to the first overhang. Climb a

double free hanging icicle of sun-leached ice for 40 m to a second overhang. Two shorter, easier steps for lead to the top. Walk off left and descend Sniveling Gully.

**Ice T.** 180 m, Grade IV, WI 6. F.A.: Marc Twight, Scott Backes. January, 1993.

Climb the Lower Weeping Wall or Sniveling Gully to the Upper Weeping Wall. Up to five independent lines sometime form to the snow ledge one-third of the way up the wall. This route is fourth from the left, between the routes Nasty Habits and Tales of Ordinary Madness. Climb the first two pitches of Tales, and traverse the snow ledge right to the base of this long narrow pillar. Climb the route in two long pitches. Both offer steep, strenuous pillars separated by bad ice. Rappel the route.

**Tax Evasion.** 80 m, Grade IV, WI 5. F.A.: Brian Webster, Ken Wallator. January, 1990

Park at the Big Bend on the Icefields Parkway and ski up towards the Saskatchewan Glacier. The climb is situated on the south-facing cliffs just past the toe of the glacier. This climb is the harder-looking of several in the area. Climb very steep ice for 25 m before it eases off somewhat for another 25 m. A second pitch of Grade 3 ice follows. Rappel route off of ice anchors.

**Schism Thing.** 80 m, Grade III, WI 4. F.A. Ken Wallator, Margot Talbot.

Located in a gully above Wilcox campground near the Columbia Icefields. Park at the entrance to the campground and ski up through the trees to the base of the climb. One steep pitch followed by an easier pitch. Walk off to the north or descend route.

**Ambivalence Falls.** 300 m, Grade IV, WI 3. F.A.: Martin

Garcea, Brian Webster, March, 1990.

A classically-thin line that snakes up through the headwall at the headwaters of Diadem Creek. A beautiful line, albeit threatened by séracs throughout. From the Icefields Parkway, ski up Diadem Creek to its headwaters (2.5 hours) Climb the obvious line through the headwall up to the sérac barrier. Traverse left here and then a few metres of mixed climbing will get you out onto the glacier above. Travel north on the glacier until you are able to enter a gully that will bring you back to the valley floor (avalanche prone).

Salamander's Tail. 120 m, Grade III, WI 4. F.A.: Ken Wallator, Brian Webster. Martin Garcea, February, 1991.

This climb was claimed as a consolation prize after an aborted attempt on the north face of Cromwell. Located just west of Lizard Lips, it offers similar but somewhat harder climbing. Ski up the Woolley Creek drainage for several hours. The first climb that you come to is Lizard Lips. Salamander's is just around the corner (G.R. 743933). A steep initial pitch leads to two more pitches of WI 3 ice. Rappel the route or traverse under avalanche slopes to Lizard Lips descent.

Memorial Falls. 50 m, Grade III, WI 5. F.A.: Brian Webster, Ken Wallator, Donna Nickolson. December, 1991

This climb is situated 200 m to the right of Shades of Beauty. It is named in memory of Jasper resident Rick Black, who died in a caving accident. Approach as per Shades of Beauty. 50 m of steep ice leads to a scree ledge and a natural chockstone belay. Rappel off the chockstone

Wild Fire. 180 m, Grade IV, WI 6. F.A.: Brian Webster, Ken Wallator. January, 1992

Drive 9 km north of Curtain Call and ski up the drainage on the west side of the highway for 2-3 hours. (This is the first

drainage north of the Diadem Creek drainage.) The climb is located on the north face of Peak 2840 at G.R. 725000. A vertical 45 m pitch of thin and intricate ice leads to a hanging belay. Twenty metres of easier ice leads to a vertical pillar and a piton belay on the right side of the falls. Climb the pillar and two more easier pitches to the top. Rappel the route using a selection of pins and ice anchors.

### Jasper

Violent Femme. 25 m, Grade III, WI 4.F.A.: Ken Wallator, Brian Webster. February, 1990

Situated on the Palisades Cliff, this is a seldom-formed climb. Going east on Highway 16, travel 3.7 km past the Maligne Lake turnoff and then turn left onto an old quarry road. Bushwack up to the Palisades Cliff and then climb immediately above you. 25 m of steep climbing that ends in the middle of a rock face. Rappel route.

## Bow Valley Rock Update

*John Martin*

Nineteen ninety-two was the busiest year ever for rock climbing activity in the Bow Corridor, with some 125 new routes being established. Most of these were at well established climbing areas, but some new areas were opened up as well.

The position of Carrot Creek as the best 5.11 to low 5.12 venue in the Bow Valley was consolidated in 1992 with 47 new climbs, many on previously undeveloped cliffs. Westside Buttress, with a sunny southern exposure that offers a refreshing alternative to the relatively dark and cool main canyon, was an instant hit after the establishment early in the year of 15 pleasant new climbs in the 10b to 12a range by Jon Jones. Andy Genereux's

Muscle Beach (lid), a classic overhanging arête at the mouth of the canyon, also became popular. In the main canyon, Raven's Nest Buttress continued to provide difficult new climbs. Todd Guyn's American Standard, which takes in the 12a crux of The Warlock and then branches left onto even steeper ground, is now the most difficult non-manufactured route in the Rockies at 13b. Other particularly noteworthy additions were The Gizzard (12b), by Guyn and Joe Buszowski, which crosses The Wizard; and Nothing Up My Sleeves (12b), by Genereux, an incredibly pumpy piece of climbing which slants left up an overhanging break from Prince of Darkness in a great position at the top of the cliff.

Grotto Canyon, after years of relative inactivity, provided a bonanza of new climbs — 46 in all. Although no new cliffs were developed, a surprising number of good quality routes in the 5.9 and 5.10 grades were found. The long-neglected north end of Paintings Wall finally came under close scrutiny and yielded some of the best new climbs, most notably Genereux's Tour de Force (12a), the stunning arête right of Tower of Pisa. Another spectacular addition, on Water Wall, was Simon Parboosingh's Metabolica (13a), which cranks through the big roof right of Tintin and Snowy Get Psyched.

Cougar Canyon was the scene of 15 new routes, most of which were on the relatively undeveloped House of Cards Cliff. The principal addition was John Martin's airy 2-pitch Ashtaroth/Heliopolis combination (10d/11a) — the first route that reaches the top of the main part of the cliff.

At Stoneworks only one new climb was established: Brent's Kg Birthday (12a/b), by Dave Dornian, which climbs the steep wall between Under the Gun and Holey Redeemer Direct.

Kanga Crag, below the east end of Rundle, which previously had only one route, now has seven, plus several other projects on the go. The main entries were two 50-m climbs near the middle of the cliff by Mark Whalen, Canadian Air (12a/b) and Leave Your Hat On (12a).

Bataan is a new area high on the south side of Grotto Mountain which features overhanging, pocketed rock. So far only two climbs have been completed, the more noteworthy being J. D. LeBlanc's Nirvana (13a). However, several others are in progress and the area appears to have the potential to become a good high-end destination, despite a very long, steep approach. [The poetry of the name of the crag deserves mention; the origin being the Bataan Death March! — ed.]

Acephale is another new area with overhanging, pocketed rock. Situated on the north side of Heart Mountain, it is shady and cool, but has a considerably shorter approach than Bataan. Five routes have been completed so far, all in the 11d to 12a/b range and all on the lowest portion of the cliff. Higher up, several harder projects are in progress and there is potential for numerous others.

Cave & Basin Crag, yet another new area, is a short distance above the Cave & Basin Pool in Banff. Three climbs have been established here, the hardest of which is Peter Arbic's Telltale Heart (12b/c).

"Traditional style" exploration of longer rock routes seems to have practically died out in the Bow Valley, despite some very obvious lines that still await so much as an attempt. The only addition in this genre for 1992 was the prominent Northeast Buttress of The Rimwall (10c), climbed in 10 pitches by Al Derbyshire and Jorge Visser.

## **Terminator 2: Cyborg Vs. X**

*Jeff Everett*

On January 17 and 20, 1993, four results of epigenetic phenomena and environmental cloning named Serge Angelucci, Jeff Everett, Alan Massin and Karl Nagy climbed on The Terminator, near Banff, Alberta.

It began. "We have to discuss this thing about discrimination. Are you saying that by climbing this thing we will show dominance over nature?" I asked the wise dispersal clone.

"Yes," the clone replied, "you see, it is we and they. Your attention was drawn to its difference. As it is most certainly non-life, you must not have a problem subordinating it. Climb this Terminator, and end its five-year rule. Disperse on that Rundle cyborg." With that prelude, our roaming began.

With technology in hand, we stealthily approached the beast in the dark. We are X, the generation of dispersal clones; we are healthy and resourceful, and do not hide from the beast which has hidden for five years and kept its magic. We luxuriate in our wealth, and to preserve it, crept up to the foot of the frozen form, to risk our lives and slay it.

After two hours journey, we arrived at its foot. The sun went over the horizon, and revealed the object: vertical, straight, rising to icy heights. We went along bare rock and attached ourselves to the drapery folds at its toe.

"Slay it," we roared in the silence, "it is not one of us, it is different. Slay it!"

Our battle that day, energy expended on the thing, resulted in nothing. We were empty-handed; we had to leave. We slid down the synthlines for rest; we left one in place for our return in three days.

A new dispersal clone appeared, another had moved

on. Again, we were fresh and on our way. We sleuthed along the trail that morning. There was a cold humid bite in the air, it snowed 15 cm that day. Our ascent of the synthlines was frightening, there was only air below.

We became bolder during the day, and 110 m of vertical ice fell to our blows. "The top!" we screamed, then we flew back down to our abodes of warmth, wealth and refuge.

On those two days, some of Generation X conquered nature. That claim should not be shocking, for the account of the mastery of this frozen manifestation of the imagination is more a mirror than a window; all of us conquer or dominate when we partake in sport, at least in our subconscious. It is just regrettable that we have to be ruthless.

## ***Icefall Lake***

*Robert Kruszyna*

This piece is intended as an addendum to Glen Boles's article, "Awash in the Frasers: Icefall Lake" (CAJ, Vol. 71, 1988, page 91), as was our excursion into the area he describes. What Glen didn't mention in his piece was the unexpectedly poor quality of the rock in this section of the Ramparts as compared to the rock on peaks accessible from the Wates-Gibson Hut. Nor did he mention the splendidly engineered campsite, with its rock cooking table, seats, fireplaces, drainage ditches, and leveled tent sites - all we had to do was pitch the canvas! "We" were Jack Taylor, Art Maki, and Harriet and Bob Kruszyna, and like Glen's group, we got there by helicopter.

After an ignominious rebuff by Postern Peak — we eventually determined we were nowhere near the proper route — we turned our sights on Scarp Peak, which had appeared attractive in our view

from the Postern-Casemate col. However, access to the glacial basin below Scarp, which drains directly into Icefall Lake, was not the straightforward affair that it more likely was for Wates and Gibson in the 1930s. Glacial recession had bared a scoured headwall scores of metres high, through which a narrow gorge channeled the roiling stream. Thus it was necessary to find a way up the steep west slope of the valley, on the flank of Goodair Peak, working up cliff bands and slabs from bushy bench to grassy slope. Finally, about 300 m above camp, it became possible to climb diagonally down into the Scarp Glacier basin, losing at least one-half of that hard-earned altitude. The ridge from Scarp Pass offers some good rock scrambling, not all of which were we able to enjoy. Luckily, we had turned back in time to reach the relative safety of the glacier just as a thunderstorm exploded upon us. I always have felt that "golf ball-sized hail" was a figure of speech, but I am now a believer.

Our program was proceeding exactly on schedule — except we had yet to reach a summit. Glen's article had suggested that there were some relatively easy peaks to be had from Jade Lake, so we packed up a fly-camp. The west ridge of Portcullis Peak slopes downward and outward at an angle of perhaps 25°, with short mantel-shelves connecting the sections. Everywhere there are large blocks — the size of refrigerators — sitting on the slopes at the angle of repose. Certainly inadvertently, indeed unknowingly, I dislodged one of these blocks, which knocked Harriet off the mantel-shelf she was climbing and then clattered down the mountain to the shore of the lake. Harriet came to rest against another such block which happily stayed put. There was a lot of blood spattered around but the damage proved

to be mostly psychological. We continued to the summit in the hope that a safer descent route would appear. One did. Jack and Art decided to spend another day at Jade Lake to climb another peak while Harriet and I returned to base to pull ourselves together.

Back in 1975, when we were climbing Oubliette from the Wates-Gibson Hut via Para Pass with Dave Whitburn, I was struck by the long, stepped north ridge of Simon Peak, connecting that peak on the Divide with the cleaver of Casemate and Postern which projects into the Rampart cirque. The strata, presumably quartzite, tilted at a favorable angle, none of the three steps appeared impossibly abrupt to this middling mountaineer, and the intervening sections of ridge lay at a very modest angle. As is my wont, I tucked away in my catalog of future projects this elegant unclimbed route.

My principal reason for going to Icefall Lake — if not that of my companions — was to attempt this route. Alas, fifteen years proved too long to tuck away this particular project; senility had set in. But between the north ridge and a buttress to the west flowed a glacier. It presumably originated high on the northern slopes of the mountain, although the buttress prevented us from seeing anything of it except the tongue and initial ice-fall, and, near the summit, the array of gigantic cornices blocking access to the summit snow-field.

With no real idea of what we would encounter, Harriet and I left camp before dawn, telling our friends we would return either shortly, or if things worked out, the next day. With 1500 vertical metres of unseen territory before us and a long, circuitous descent and return, we knew a bivouac would be required if the route "went."

The route initially lay up the right lateral moraine, in

the direction of the Simon-Casemate col. The lower icefall was devoid of snow, so we were able to wander back and forth through the crevasses and séracs. A 25-m pitch of front-pointing and clawing brought us to easier, snow-covered slopes. These we followed to the upper icefall, at a point where the trough in which the glacier lays is severely constricted by the rock walls on either side. The crevasses were adequately bridged and we soon found ourselves in a great upper cirque, some 600 m below the summit. The cirque hung between the summit itself and a prominence on the west ridge, a width of perhaps 800 m. The walls, almost completely snow/ice, sloped up ever more steeply to the ridge crest, protected by huge cornices.

In actuality, there were several potential lines from the cirque up to the ridge crest, but none of them looked especially inviting. Beneath the westerly prominence there was no cornice but the sun was already on that slope, riven with the tracks of falling debris. Farther east, a predominantly rock rib came down but access to it was blocked by a large bergschrund. Between these two were the most promising lines, three of which we explored. In the center, the cornice had fallen, forming a nearly vertical ice wall with a jumble of blocks — and holes — at its base. We were unable to work our way through to the wall itself. We then tried to traverse laterally onto the rock rib, outflanking the ‘schrund, but that curled up into a sneer.

The last, and most dangerous, line went directly up under a gigantic eyebrow which extended perhaps 15 m out over the slope below. At its right end, it merged into the aforementioned sunny slope down which rocks were occasionally dropping. As we prepared to tackle this option, a

stray missile zinged by, nearly toppling me into a crevasse. Oh for a couple of hard hats!

Up the 45° slope we pointed, staying in the protective but menacing shadow of the cornice. The snow was somewhat punky but held well enough. Nothing came down. Underneath the cornice itself, I moved right onto the sunny slope to turn the obstacle. Suddenly I was in soft, slushy stuff to my crotch. I gingerly crossed a crevasse onto gentler slopes above the cornice. The bridge collapsed behind Harriet. I will not endeavor to describe the 250-m trudge in sodden snow to the summit.

I had originally intended to descend directly south from Simon Peak, down the snow and glacier route used by the Thorington party on the first ascent of the peak in 1919. Then we would circle west, against the grain, crossing several ridges and return finally over Scarp Pass to the Icefall Lake drainage. However, after wallowing down a hundred metres, we realized that the upper snow no longer connected with the glacier below, a result of seventy years of “global warming.” Thrashing back up, we traversed the ridge from Simon to McDonnell Peak, which nowadays is the normal route by which Simon is reached. From McDonnell, an easy ridge leads down to the Fraser Glacier on the east and another on the west, the way we were supposed to go home. By this time (7p.m.), we were tired and addled enough to choose a night in the Wates-Gibson Hut over a bivouac on some high rocky shoulder. The next morning we paid for that decision by climbing back up the 1000 m to the McDonnell ridge before continuing our way homeward.

After two fifteen-hour days in a row, with some 2500 m of elevation gain and loss, not to mention some moments of great

anxiety, I am only too glad to call it “K’s Last Route.”

Simon Peak. New route via north glacier, August, 1990, Bob and Harriet Kruszyna.

Goodair Peak. F.A. via south slopes, August, 1990, Art Maki. Bob and Harriet Kruszyna.

## **Rock Routes In The Athabasca Glacier Area**

*Peter Uzbielo*

The following is a list of routes completed by various partners and me during the summer of 1991.

Face climb above Columbia Icefields campground, 5.7 Peter Uzbielo, solo, June, 1991. Not recommended — loose.

Wood Tick’s Promenade, 5.9-. On Cirrus Mountain. Peter Uzbielo, M. Parker.

The first pitch follows a climb done by Todd Drysdale in 1987. The variation goes to the right through the slab. Highly recommended.

Rainbow Ladder, 5.10. Athabasca Glacier area. Peter Uzbielo, C. Bataille, July, 1991. From the Snocoach terminal, down to the Athabasca Glacier, keep to the left. Fifteen minutes from the bottom of the wall. The route begins to the left of the waterfall. Highly recommended.

Walk With The Dog, 5.8. Mount Athabasca, west face. Peter Uzbielo, solo, August 17, 1991. From the Snocoach terminal, traverse to scree slope under west face. Very stable rock, highly recommended.

Misty Maiden, 5.8. Mount Athabasca, west face. Peter Uzbielo, C Bataille, August 19, 1991. 25 m left of Walk With The Dog. Highly recommended.

Invitation To Dance, 5. 11c/d.

On the approach path to Mount Athabasca.

Peter Uzbielo, TR, August 29, 1991.

On an east-facing rock on the

right side of the approach path, 25 minutes from the parking lot. Highly recommended.

Short But Pretty, 5.8+. Mount Wilcox.

Peter Uzbielo, C. Bataille, September 3, 1991.

15-minute walk from the Icefields Chalet, on the west face of wide rock band below Mount Wilcox.

## **The Short Story Of Pipimenschen\***

**A Short Mixed Climb In The Canadian Rockies**

*Jeff Everett*

Finally, a day off. We fuelled up the land rocket and once again headed for the hills. One hour later, we were coating our stiff bodies in nylon and plastic and getting ready to carry our bags up Canyon Creek. We were three: TFM (the forgetful man), TCM (the climbing-type man), and me TSM (the story man). Oh yeah, and Uli the dog was also there. I have to mention Uli because she is the only one who participates in outdoor activity in the way evolution had designed her. She sniffs, runs, digs and growls. She does not pound pitons into rock, eat sandwiches, or talk about Fourier series.

Sixty-five minutes of pretty easy walking and we were at the base of an unformed pillar on the south face of a cirque; this is what we had come to climb. TFM, at that point, made us aware that he had forgotten his harness and helmet: post-alcoholic brain degradation. TCM pointed out that it might take too long to go straight up to the pillar — it probably last touched down during the Bronze Age. He suggested we go up the 20- m high water groove off to the left, and sure enough, he was right. A few hooks here, a few pitons there, and some nasty little bolts (‘cause our moms still like us), and we were up. It could be freed, as



Marginal ice, pitch 1, Pipimenschen. Photo: Jeff Everett.

it's now protected by the bolts and the rock is superb.

A stroll to the right and we finally got to use some more of the expensive goodies we carried up. One pitch of Grade 4 ice — excellent consistency in November — and we were at the top. TCM and TSM cheered; Uli sniffed, ran, dug and growled. We touched ground as it got dark. It's a route well worth the effort. Unless of course, it's too short for you.

Pipimenschen. Grade III, 5.6, A2, WI4.

F.A.: Jeff Everett, Glenn Reisenhofer (TCM), Bob Lee (TFM November, 1992).

Located in Canyon Creek, west of the Powderface Trail near Bragg Creek, AB.

\*Pipimenschen: Glenn says that this German word refers to people who are underendowed or something.

## ***“Unclimbed Peaks In The Canadian Rockies” — Not!***

*Alastair Des Moulins*

After reading John Martin's article, "Unclimbed Peaks in the Canadian Rockies," (CAJ, Vol. 75, 1992, page 84), I am writing to record that some of the unclimbed peaks which



John mentions are peaks I have recently been up. My recent ascents of the peaks listed include:

West peak of double summit (3140 m contour) 5 km north of Icefall Mountain. Map 82-N/16, G.R. 546479. Ascent made from camp at 504488 near fork in Escarpment River to a top west of the peak, then along ridge avoiding cliffband by traversing on south side. No rope required. We built a cairn. Alistair Des Moulins and Reg Fryling, July 1990.

3080+ m peak, 2 km north-northwest of Martin Lake. Map 82-N/16, G.R. 585405. Ascent made from camp at 531392 in Martin Creek valley to 2835 m col north-northwest of peak. One minor cliffband at around 2925 m. No rope required. We built a cairn. Alistair Des Moulins and Reg Fryling, August 1990.

Mount McConnell. Map 82-N/9, G.R. 687218. Ascent from camp near 2195+ m lake south of peak, via valley to near 2835 m col west of peak, then via south-facing slopes before final 30 m scramble to mainly snow-covered summit. Alistair and Gail Des Moulins, July 1991.

Dip Slope Mountain (the two tops in an east-west line about 2 km apart and north of the named top). Map 82-N/9, G.R. 590320 and 604318. Ascent from camp at about 2635 m, about

1.5 km southeast of Dip Slope Mountain (named top), over col east of named top, down small icefield, then up to 2745 m col south of the westerly of the two tops. Thence walk up east top. East top already had a cairn on it. Alistair Des Moulins, July 1991.

Unnamed 3040+ m peak, 2 km east of Mount McDonald. Map 83-C/7, G.R. 061998.

From camp in valley north of Mount McDonald, up scree then small glacier to 2800 m col east-southeast of Mount McDonald and southwest of objective peak. Then followed straightforward ridge to summit of approximately 3060 m. Built cairn. A second top at the north end of the summit ridge seemed lower. Alistair Des Moulins, Dick Jull, John Merritt and Keith Rezin, July 1992.

Obstruction Mountain. Map 83-C/7, G.R. 080039. From camp near sunken lake almost 3 km south of peak to col southwest of peak. Then up southwest slopes to gain ridge northwest of summit. Possible cairn on lower northwest top. Sloping slabs between there and highest point, one very short exposed section (about 4 steps, no rope). No cairn on summit. Alistair Des Moulins, Dick Jull and John Merritt, July 1992.

## ***Mount Colin—A New Route***

On descending the southeast ridge of Mount Colin, after having ascended the northwest ridge with Phil Kemp (this was the 24th anniversary of my first ascent of this ridge, also on an ACC Edmonton Section trip in 1968), I was struck, not for the first time, by the exceptionally good quality of the rock on this ridge. Looking down to my right, I saw a huge inside corner, almost a ramp, that appeared to go all the way to the bottom of the face. I pointed this out

to Phil, and he agreed to have a go at it on Monday before hiking out and driving back to Edmonton.

The route is not visible from the hut. From about the point where Garonne Creek emerges from the talus, it is seen as the most prominent break leading to the southeast ridge, at about 2/5 height (below the Smythe

Step), a large right-facing, left-leaning inside corner. It is probably best approached from the bottom of the valley, directly below the start.

Begin directly in the corner/chimney. About halfway up, we traversed onto the buttress/rib to the left, but this is probably not necessary (at this point we found an old piton in the rock).

There is excellent protection (no pitons were used), and good potential for more (and harder) routes in the same part of the face. Both protectability and rock quality are definitely superior to the Pfisterer route. The climbing is consistently moderate, and it is impossible to get lost. This route could well prove unclimbable in wet

weather or in early spring.

On-Ramp For An Off-day!  
Southwest face of Mount Colin,  
7 pitches, 5.5.

F.A.: Reinhard Berg and Phil Kemp, August 3, 1992.

*Reinhard Berg*

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## The East

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### Recent Rock Developments Near Montreal

*Peter Gernassnig*

Due to scant amounts of steep rock, good sport climbing is hard to come by in the Montreal area. However, some of the old timers, now rich enough to own Hiltis, have been seen roaming through the forests. With froth-flecked mouths and glazed looks in their eyes, they have braved the swarms of black flies and endured the fields of poison ivy to come up with a variety of very good routes.

Within half an hour's drive of Montreal's West End is a small top-roping area called Rigaud. Long known for its moderate routes and loose rock, Rigaud was never popular. That is, until Geoff Creighton came along. When the dust had settled, three fine steep routes awaited us: Peter Tracks (11d), Discharge (12a), and Weeping Butt Crack (12b). Being newly motivated by Geoff's efforts with my Hilti (at least he buys his own bits!), the Diehedral (5.9), V.D. (10b) and the G Spot (11a) quickly became the most popular routes at the crag. Nic Valance bolted Sputnik, a.k.a. Nicky's Dicky, and Guy Parent did a thin face graded 10c. Also of note was Geoff's thin crack climb, What About Bob (12b, R), named after "Boulder Bob" Cartwright, who kept saying he was going to do it.

Forty-five minute's drive

north of Montreal is a long-neglected crag named Baldy. Geoff made fast work of the Monument Builders (11a) and the Outsider (12c), burning out a few belayers on the latter. Perhaps due to a brief lapse in sanity, or a longing for a return to his traditionalist past, Geoff also created Chalk Fight (11d). A heinous-looking overhanging crack, it remains unrepeated. Baldy has the potential for some very hard sport routes; all that is currently lacking is a climber willing and able to do them.

Continuing northward, we come to Val David. Long the most popular of the Montreal area crags, it now sports over 400 routes and about as many climbers. An old "new" crag in Val David, Le Dame des Coeurs, was finally bolted. Paul Laperriere was the guilty party, both for the doing and the dallying. The area now sports four 5.9s, six 5.10s, three 5.12s and an unconfirmed 5.13a. The climbing is typified by side pulls and underclings on vertical rock. Howls of despair have been heard from first-timers there as they try to pull onto the thin grim slab at the top. They say it's just like Buoux.

Surprisingly, Zebra, the triple-tiered, overhanging finger crack at Mont King has still not seen any attempts. Situated on the largest of the Val David crags, this route could well be one of the hardest crack climbs in North America when finally freed. I have heard the 5.14 number bandied about, but who

knows — it's all talk at this point!

Other areas are being developed, but as yet, information is hard to come by. What is desperately needed is a guidebook, and rumour has it that not one but two, are in the works.

That's a brief summary of the climbing scene around Montreal. True sport climbing is fairly limited, but good routes at all grades are being done. If you are ever "back East" for a visit, don't forget your rock shoes.

### Rock Climbing In Nova Scotia

*Sean Willett*

Mention of the Maritimes is likely to generate images of scenic coastlines, sailboats, lighthouses, and secluded fishing villages; a postcard from Peggy's Cove. Rock climbing is not normally associated with Canada's east coast, but the rugged beauty of Nova Scotia's coast is due to the hard rock exposed by ice-age glaciers and it does not take much exploration to find climbable rock. Indeed, the thousands of annual visitors to the lighthouse on the granite point at Peggy's Cove are also, unknowingly, visiting a fine bouldering site. Lack of relief is the limiting factor in Nova Scotia climbing; elevation gain is limited to less than 100 m in most of the province, and multi-pitch climbs are rare. But, as any aficionado of modern free

climbs can attest, height isn't everything and some good short climbs have been established on Nova Scotia granite. Nova Scotia may never become a climbing destination, but visitors and residents should be aware of the possibilities for fine climbing.

Most of the climbing in Nova Scotia takes place in two areas: Eagles Nest, whose proximity to Halifax makes it the most popular area in the province, and Paces Lake in the Musquodoboit Valley.

Eagles Nest consists of several scruffy little bands of quartzite with no more than 15 m of relief. But its location at the head of the Bedford Basin within sight of downtown Halifax insures its popularity. The area is part of Admirals Cove municipal park owned by the city of Bedford. The city, while not explicitly endorsing rock climbing, is aware that climbing occurs and has been tolerant, so that access is less of a concern than at some of the other privately-owned areas in the province. The gentle angle, low relief, tree anchors and easy top-roping access make the area popular with beginners and instructional classes, but there are also more challenging possibilities with several overhanging sections and even one bolted sport climb (5.11). There is also good bouldering to be found throughout the park. Climbs at Eagles Nest are most often top-roped as the scarcity of cracks

and potential for serious ground falls make leading somewhat questionable.

The main cliff can be seen and reached from Shore Drive which follows the edge of the Bedford Basin, or from trails originating in the residential area behind the park.

The most varied, and by most opinions the best, climbing in Nova Scotia is found in the Musquodoboit Valley, an hour northeast of the Halifax/ Dartmouth area. Two cliffs overlooking Paces Lake, known as the First Face and the Main Face, have served as the principle playground for Nova Scotia climbers since the late 1970s. With up to 75 m of relief, the Main Face at Paces Lake is the largest vertical piece of granite yet discovered by climbers in Nova Scotia. This potential has not gone unrecognized, and the area contains the highest concentration of technical rock routes in the province. There are currently nearly 100 established routes in the Musquodoboit area at grades from 5.5 to 5.12 and are up to three pitches in length. The First Face can be seen and reached by a ten-minute walk from the Paces Lake boat access off Highway 224 west of Musquodoboit Harbour. The Main Face is 1 km south and is reached by canoe or a poorly-marked, privately-owned trail leaving Highway 224, 1.5 km east of the boat access turnoff.

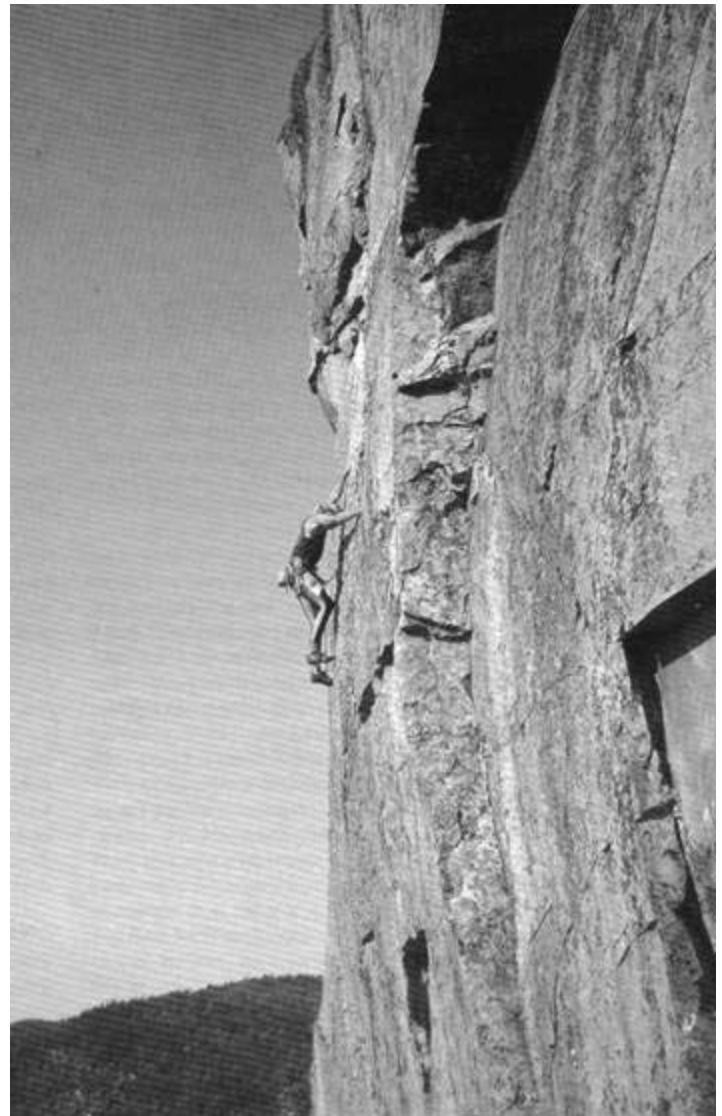
All the climbs at Paces Lake are on private land and, with the growing popularity of climbing, access has been, and will continue to be, a concern. One landowner at the Main Face has expressed concern with climbing on his property and, although the area has remained open, permission is currently required to climb at the Main Face. For current information, climbers should contact Climb Nova Scotia at the address below.

The First Face at Paces Lake

provides some of the cleanest, steepest routes at "the lake." Although it is under 30 m in height, it is vertical to overhanging for most of its extent, and offers some excellent crack and face climbs. The last two years have seen the first all-bolted sport climbs developed in the province, and this has opened up new possibilities on the steep, fractured granite of the First Face. There are currently half a dozen bolted climbs in the 5.11-5.12 range, and more are likely to go in next year.

With a height of 75 m and an extent of nearly half a kilometre, the Main Face at Paces Lake offers a wide variety of climbing. The Main Face is cut by several ledge systems so that sustained climbs are rare, but the intervening steps are steep. Overhanging cracks are the norm here, but steep face and even slab climbs can be found. Grades are typically moderate (5.7 to 5.10), although both easier and harder climbs are available.

The lake directly below the Main Face provides both a scenic background to the day's activities and an opportunity for a refreshing après-climb swim on hot summer days. In the centre of the face a large slab extends directly out of the water and several climbs traverse in to start from the water's edge.



Sean Willett on Ludicrous Anachronism, Paces Lake. Photo: Willett collection

Otherwise poorly-protected slab climbs are relatively safe, provided the leader can swim.

always been a rather solitary experience. In contrast to many climbing areas in the world, the cliffs around Halifax are

Climbing in Nova Scotia has



Paces Lake, NS. Photo: Sean Willett.

still far from crowded. It is not uncommon to be the only party at the crags, even on a warm summer weekend. While this is part of the attraction of climbing here, many local climbers would like to see more activity to encourage the sense of community. More climbing traffic would also help keep the lichen growth down! Two developments over the last year should encourage the growth of climbing in Nova Scotia. The first was the installation of an indoor climbing wall at Dalhousie University. The wall was the result of lobbying by local climbers and a financial contribution from Brian and Betty Adams in memory of their son Ben, an enthusiastic climber who died at age 14 of a heart ailment. The climbing wall is open to the public as part of the Dalplex Athletic Facility and year-round climbing is very welcome in the harsh climate of the Maritimes.

The second development of last year was the formation of a provincial climbing association, Climb Nova Scotia. Although access to Paces Lake was the original motivation to organize, the association is finding other useful roles to play in the region, such as disseminating information on climbing areas, providing instructional clinics, certifying instructors, and organizing competitions. Climb Nova Scotia can be contacted through Sport Nova Scotia, Box 3010 S, Halifax, NS, B3J 3G6.

## **Rock And Ice Climbing In New Brunswick**

*Jeff Holmes & Joe  
Kennedy*

Since 1976, there has been an active climbing community in New Brunswick. It was at this time that the University of New Brunswick Rock and Ice Climbing Club was formed. This club continues to provide courses, gear and trips to all interested members and, although the club is situated in Fredericton, there are a considerable number of climbers in other parts of New Brunswick.

The first climbing guide was published by Colin Bell in 1978, and recorded 36 rock and 5 ice routes. Since then, climbing in New Brunswick has continued to grow at an ever-increasing rate. The latest guide book, published in 1987 by Steve Adamson, contains 107 rock and 15 ice routes. In 1992, it was necessary to add a supplement to this guide, with an additional 70 rock routes. Although the majority of routes are traditional in style, sport routes are springing up. The routes have grades up to the 5.12 range. One of the benefits of climbing in New Brunswick is that it is still in its infancy. Even on the main cliff at Cochrane Lane, there are still large areas waiting to be developed.

With our long, cold winters and numerous waterfalls, ice climbing is also quite popular. Unlike rock climbing, which is centred around Welesford, ice climbing is scattered around the province. In the past couple of years, ice has had a big boost with the discovery, through aerial photographs, of a couple of top-notch areas outside of Sussex. These areas can compete with anything else eastern North America has to offer.

For climbers planning a

trip to New Brunswick, we've compiled this brief list of the various climbing areas:

### **Welesford**

Several granite cliffs which make up the Welesford area are located 80 km outside Fredericton on Route 7 heading towards Saint John.

### **Cochrane Lane**

By far the largest and most developed climbing area in the province. This cliff is approximately 75 m at the highest point, and almost 1.5 km in length. There are well over 100 rock routes, along with a half dozen aid climbs still waiting to be freed. In the winter, there are four WI 4 ice routes that usually form.

### **Said Peak**

An aesthetic 10-m high cliff which provides some excellent rock climbs as well as boulder problems. It's a great place to spend a warm afternoon.

### **Eagle Rock**

Situated across from Cochrane Lane, this area, although less developed, contains several good free and aid rock routes. It also boasts the first recorded climb in New Brunswick.

### **The Quarry**

An abandoned quarry provides an easy access setting for ice climbing. There are 11 single-pitch routes which typically form. Climbs can easily be top-roped providing a good area for learning. The routes are WI 4 to 5.

### **Fredericton**

#### **The University of New Brunswick**

A 3.5 m by 12 m climbing wall was constructed in 1992. Although only a traversing wall, it offers a great place to keep your muscles in shape over the winter. A 1.25 m overhang challenges even the advanced climbers. The Bridge Pier



Cochrane Lane ice. Photo: Jeff Holmes.

An old stone bridge pier along the shore of the Saint John River in the heart of Fredericton provides an excellent area to get pumped on a warm summer evening.

### **Saint John**

#### **Minister's Face**

Located on the southeast face of Long Island on the Kennebecasis River, directly across from the Rothesay Yacht Club. There are three excellent one-pitch ice climbs up to WI 4.



Cochrane Lane rock. Photo: Jeff Holmes.



## **Boisestown Falls Brook**

Flowing into the southwest Miramichi River, Falls Brook is easily accessible via a logging road northwest of Boisestown. The waterfall is one of the highest in New Brunswick. The WI 4 ice climb can be done in a single pitch.

## **Woodstock Hayes Fall**

Located on the Trans-Canada Highway 75 km outside Fredericton on route to Woodstock. Access to the frozen waterfall is by way of the Maliseet Indian Trail (approximately a 45-minute hike). The waterfall is

approximately 20 m in height. The hike in, as well as the scenery, make this spot a definite must for all ice climbers. The various routes are WI 3.

## **Grand Falls The Gorge**

The ice climbs are situated inside the town of Grand Falls, only five minutes away from the nearest McDonald's. There are five to six single-pitch routes, WI 3 to 4, located in the gorge down-river from the hydro dam.

## **Sussex Walton's Glen/ Little Salmon River**

Located on the Bay of Fundy

coast between St. Martins and Fundy National Park. This area boasts the greatest concentration as well as the highest and hardest ice routes in New Brunswick. Access is via a logging road which, unless plowed, requires a 15-km ski along with a two-hour tramp through the woods. The difficult access has prevented complete development of this area. However, the future will likely expose dozens of new routes.

## **Hidden Valley**

This narrow ravine, approximately 90 m long and 45 to 60 m high, is blanketed by ice on both sides. Due to the steep and narrow nature of the ravine, the

ice is not exposed to the sun for very long. This makes for a long season lasting into April.

These route descriptions are not comprehensive enough to guide you to the actual areas, but are instead meant to give you an idea of the general location, as well as the amount of climbing available, both rock and ice. For more information, please contact: Jeff Holmes (506) 452-8880 Steve Adamson (506) 450-7811 Joe Kennedy (506) 832-6055

or:

U.N.B. Rock & Ice Climbing Club c/o The University of New Brunswick Physical Education and Recreation Department Fredericton, NB E3B 5A3

# *Plastic*

## *The Crag Illusionists Of The Great White* Geoff Creighton

Froze to the bone in my igloo home, counting the days 'til the ice turns green.

—Echo And The Bunnymen

A van is a scary vehicle to command on Canadian roads in this most unforgiving of seasons — the winter. My tires are wearing, my nerves are frayed, and I am disconsolate over my return to a land that is already plunged into bitter cold and heavy-coat fashion. But more than this, I mourn the end of the rock climbing season, and my departure from the deserts of the American southwest, where I have just wrapped up another multi-month tour.

Does it matter that I can't crag year-round? Canada is a wonderful land with spectacular mountains. For years when climbing in winter, I have often felt like a kid in a mud puddle — stomping around with all that gear, feeling bad-ass. Damn the French with their varied climate

and voluptuous limestone!

As I sulk and the temperature inches downward with every kilometre north, I decide to commit myself to a winter of cragging — indoors! I am tired of making progress only to be shut down by the seasons, so why not take advantage of all this amazing indoor wall technology?

Another thought occurs to me. Perhaps I should continue my tour in Canada — on plastic! I am heading to Vancouver to do a course for a week and visit friends and relatives. There is a rock-gym (a.k.a. climbing gym) there called The Edge. My frequent road trip partner tells me it's the best in North America. Bingo! I'll start there and check out every gym along the way back to Montreal before school starts in January.

And so it was done.

This then, is a critical analysis designed to highlight what the consumer should expect from rock-gyms, based on what I learned from Canada's plastic crags: The Edge in Vancouver, The University of Calgary's Climbing wall, The University of Alberta's Entre-prises wall (second-hand info only), Joe

Rockhead's in Toronto, the University of Montreal's wall, CEGEP Andre Laurendeau's wall. There are tales of planners preparing a few more megagyms, but as yet no stone (nor panel) has been laid.

There are a couple of other walls of low technology that I did not visit as their rumoured quality kept me away. I consulted with several American rock-gym owners or instructors as well as a few well-travelled climbers with plenty of experience, and I read a lot.

In order to guide the reader through the world of indoor climbing, I will take The Edge as an example and analyze its components, thus paving a comparison/baseline for us all.

## **The Edge**

Unit 2, 1485 Welch Street, North Vancouver

\$10 per day; monthly and yearly rates available.

## **Overview**

Located in North Vancouver in a warehouse on the waterfront, this is Canada's flagship indoor gym. Much hubbub has filtered east about

the bucks that were spent, and the extensive consultation sought in producing an uncompromised state-of-the-art apparatus. Opened early in '92, the place has become a popular roost with coastal climbers, offering everything from slabs to overhanging 15m routes with over 650 square metres of climbing architecture. At the time of my visit in December, a cappuccino bar and lounge area had just been built, and a series of imprint-style walls were due to go in soon. All space was devoted to top-roping or bouldering (lead routes are due in soon).

## **The Climbing**

I was in search of steep ground. Three severely overhanging 15 m top-ropes (with several quality elimination variations) greet the visitor upon entering the gym. Gently overhanging routes were also about, as well as plenty of easy-angled novice-level terrain. The grades range between 5.3 and 5.13 + . What makes or breaks even a potentially good gym is the design of each route. For this, one requires a course-setter with some experience on

plastic, and a patient, creative mind. Marc Dube and Jim and Jola Sandford (as well as several staffers) have generated a score of beautifully choreographed moves, and their hard work was evident in routes easy to desperate.

What of the materials? It is most economical to build a wall of flat, textured plywood and fibreglass panels (coated with Rock-Tex or something similar) using bolt-on holds due to the expense involved with imprint systems (featured, convoluted panels). Al and Ed Fischer, owners/managers of The Edge, went for the economy version, although imprint systems are in the plans. It is tough to concoct a route on a monotonous surface that will not ultimately be the source of some short person's torment. Hopefully, as is the case with The Edge, most routes have compensating alternatives, or a scrunch problem where the tall person whines. As Marc Dube said, "Don't get hung up about the grades — just get strong."

The routes are all designed at present for top-ropeing, but sections have been structurally built for leading and competing and are soon to change. Anchors set into the floor are required for use by belayers. Ropes are pre-rigged on routes through plenty of quick-draws that are reclipped on the way down, or with a special pole that can be used by staffers from the ground. The abundance of "draws" (Mambas!) is especially helpful on the overhung routes where a fall would otherwise dictate the big swing and a lower to the ground, making it impossible to boulder-out the sequence and "work" the route with the eventual intention of a falls-free ascent.

The one glaring oversight for a gym of this stature is the lack of a bouldering "hell-cave." Despite some fun bouldering traverses, a hell-cave was not in evidence, but a huge one is

apparently on the way.

Hell-caves are considered standard training apparatus for serious winter-trapped climbers, and the more serious make this the focus of their training, often building mini-caves in the basement (a.k.a. cellars). Why? There are several reasons:

1. Radically steep walls work the big muscles of the back and shoulders much more than a vertical wall. As a workout, much more of the whole upper body gets hammered.
2. Bigger holds are required. This translates to less painful holds (razors) and less tendon damage from over-crimping.
3. The climbing is more dynamic, more exciting, with wilder moves required in order to execute a sequence.
4. More climbing per square metre. In order to bypass a hard section, a ridiculous number of thought-provoking manoeuvres and crazy-legged body language are required to power one through the crux.

### Safety and Liability

I signed a waiver at the door, and was told what are considered safe and required practices. There are usually a couple of staff present to supervise and help. In the future, I foresee a standard certification required of such individuals in the light of some recent accidents (see Climbing, No. 136). At present, all instructors at The Edge are certified ACMG (Association of Canadian Mountain Guides) Climbing Instructors. This is the only rock-gym in North America requiring such certification.

Are such standards necessary? A recognized national standard is certainly in the consumer's best interests, but many teachers currently involved in the sport of climbing balk at this notion, or desire a

less expensive alternative. A good lawsuit is all it will take to speed up the process. Given that there is an infrastructure already in place in the form of the ACMG, which is in turn associated with the international UIAGM, why not start here?

A North American Climbing-Gym Owners' meeting occurred recently in Reno, attempting to standardize rock-gym structural codes. Standards and an organization to enforce them will help calm government and insurance companies alike, especially in the event of a calamity where closures to all related operations are the potential knee-jerk government bureaucrat's answer.

The floors at The Edge are well-padded and carpeted for minor bouldering falls and overall sanitation. Instruction is available by request, the lighting is bright, and despite the huge numbers during peak hours, the Entre-prises USA designed layout permits one to rest on the ground and watch, without getting in the way of those actively climbing or belaying.

Of concern were the often cable-like static ropes and those with obvious sheath-slippage that appear to be a standard problem at all rock-gyms (rope manufacturers take note). It can become quite difficult for even experienced belayers to feed such ropes, and a potential danger arises where a harsh fall on a fumbling belayer could result in carnage.

### Personnel

Climbers are notoriously self-indulgent, arrogant, illiterate, and less than tolerant of "bumblies." Such is not the case at The Edge. All staff are helpful, smiling, attentive, and sympathetic to the needs of novice and advanced alike. At least half are women. Al and Ed, the owners, are psyched with their operation and are usually present to "oversee

production."

### Atmosphere and Amenities

Many rock-gyms operate only during the peak hours, causing overcrowding, waiting lines, and a feeling of time-constrained rushing (which sucks if you want to build power and take big rests). The Edge is open to the general public from noon to 11 p.m. Monday to Friday, and 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Plenty of parking is available (30 spots in front, plus more in a nearby lot). The location in North Vancouver is a serious hurdle for one faced with having to cross the Lion's Gate Bridge during rush hour. Public transit to Welch Street will give you strong legs as the nearest bus at present is on Marine Drive.

Other conveniences include: plenty of lounge area to stretch and chat; a second floor coffee and soda bar with tables, chairs, and magazines; info and gear counter; bathrooms and showers; a clean, carpeted floor in the main climbing area; a top-notch sound system with varied tunes from classical to alternative; no loose chalk (Bison Balls are allowed); adequate ventilation; route names and grades at the base of the walls (in color-coded chalk), a variety of membership plans; and a truly cool, fun, friendly, diverse clientele. The holds are removed and washed regularly (or replaced) and the routes are reset every month or so.

### Inconveniences and Dislikes

No lockers for clothes and valuables; industrial heaters near the ceiling mean the climber slimes near the top, while the belayer or loungee freezes below on the deck; barefoot climbing is permitted — gross!; no lead-routes or hell-cave (yet); no limited use (e.g., 10 visits) payment plans. It must be remembered that The Edge is still under construction

with the intention of rectifying such problems. To their credit, the owners are continually researching and developing in a very rapidly changing techno-environment.

### Joe Rockhead's

29 Eraser Avenue, Toronto.  
\$12 per day, yearly membership rates available.

### Overview

A new location for this business sets it down near the C.N.E. grounds. Boasting 745 square metres of wall space, and a couple of 12 m lead routes, this is by far Canada's best eastern winter crag.

### The Climbing

The panels and holds are of similar design to The Edge. Routes are shorter, and there is less in the way of overhanging routes. The course-setting is poorly thought out. There is an inadequate amount of "quicks" on the top-ropes. Jumping onto the lead routes requires an additional cash investment and a test.

A hell-cave with serious crash-padding is probably the gym's most striking feature — although when I was there, someone was learning how to clip a rope in the thing under the paid tutelage of an instructor, making my bouldering session something of a battle. I'm assuming this was an anomaly, because I was pissed off.

The next day, I ran into some friends with a "cellar" — a homemade, plywood mini-hell in the basement. I trained there for the rest of my stay in Toronto. It didn't cost me a dime and I had a blast.

### Safety and Liability

Similar waiver and rule procedures to The Edge, except all belaying is off of Grigris semipermanently fixed to ropes and anchored directly to the floor. They are usually at an awkward height and difficult



The Edge. Photo: Fischer brothers.

to employ — cratering is still very possible with such a set-up. The same rope wear and rope stiffness problems as The Edge occur here, contributing to an already burdensome belay rig that is totally inapplicable to the outdoors. This is a fact that must be considered in light of the proximity to the Niagara Escarpment.

### Personnel

Somewhat aloof — seemed like there may have been a good party the previous evening. Ah, what do I know? I only went one night.

### Atmosphere and Amenities

I only went one night for several reasons:

1. No parking except in a lot a block away with abundant signage warning one not to park. Everyone seems to anyway. I feared greatly for my car stereo. Public transport is an alternative.
2. No limited use payment plan. Either \$12 a pop,

or a year's membership. This doesn't cater to the traveller (moi).

3. The floor space below routes is composed of a dirty, dusty gravel that gets all over your bare feet and shoes. Someone brought in (get this) a dog, which promptly piddled at the base of a route. And yes barefoot climbing is allowed (oogh!).
4. The hours are too limiting: Monday to Friday 4 to 10 p.m.; noon to 6 p.m. on weekends.

The clientele seemed really cool.

### University of Calgary, University of Alberta, University of Montréal, CEGEP Andre Laurendeau

A few years back, some marketing genius decided the best way to sell schools (with their loaded coffers and high ceilings) on the idea of building a climbing wall, is to tell them

"it's using undeveloped space — the vertical." A nifty idea, except people congregate around the base of this "undeveloped dimension," and activities occurring simultaneously nearby conflict for each other's attention and floor space.

It may be a cop-out to lump all these walls into one final category, but I didn't want to be repeatedly negative about some pretty nice novice-oriented walls where some pretty cool institutions invested some pretty big bucks, where nothing else is around for several provinces or states. The truth is clear, however, in that their technology is outdated, they get boring really quickly, and a couple of them conduct an operation that borders on being unsafe (not to mention being a clusterf--k).

The biggest problem arises with scheduling conflicts. I have arrived at some of these places just to find they are closed due to a class. If they have regular hours, they get swamped with people and you can't do jack. If you can climb, be prepared for a grease-test; such walls usually don't get the scheduled maintenance they should, with the end result that holds are polished and greasy. I noticed certain bolt-on imprints wore quite poorly, having lost their roughness. Such problems are common on school walls, as some bureaucrat got sold a trendy product, but not the regular upkeep that's required — and there is a lot!

The two Montreal walls have the worst rope management systems I have seen: a huge loop of twine encircles a cylindrical beam in the rafters and extends to the ground. You tie your rope to the loop, pull on the twine and presto — a top-rope! Question: What do we do with the twine- It is a major pain in the ass.

CEGEP Andre Laurendeau has a serious problem. The

beams for the ropes were installed during construction of the sport complex and accidentally painted with a durable, pimply-textured paint. Ropes get mangled. You can rent ropes there for a buck, but, uh — need I go on?

Neither of these walls have any ground anchor arrangement, which makes for great fun when Sally belays Thor from the enticing bench 15m out from the wall. It is all too common to see cheesy belaying and improper tie-ins, not to mention harnesses rented

by unknowledgeable staff that are not assembled properly.

The University of Calgary wall is popular with instructors because one can easily get around to the top and teach rappelling and rescue — the only rock-gym I am aware of with this feature. The University of Alberta has perhaps the highest wall, and its Entre-prises imprint surface is certainly the most stone-like. I actually did not visit this wall, but very reliable sources pointed out it is not very steep, and the bouldering is strictly

vertical.

On the plus side of school walls, you meet a lot of super folks, you can often get a membership that allows you to use the other facilities on the premises, and the price is usually a lot lower than a privately-owned rock-gym.

Personally, I'd rather train in a good cellar with a couple of friends than pay to deal with the problems inherent with such places. Now, if they had a hell-cave...

### Concluding Remarks

The future of climbing gyms remains to be seen. They appear to be enormously popular at all hours, and with Canada's long winters, they provide a refreshing, exciting alternative to the limited choices available for those who can't stomach the "squash and pony club" scene. I would always rather crag in France, but you know, at least it never rains at Rockhead's or The Edge.

## Foreign

### 1992 Pumori Expedition

*Jeff Holmes*

On September 16, 1992, ten Maritimers, along with seven others from Ontario, Manitoba, and Alberta, met in Katmandu, Nepal, to form the 1992 Canadian Pumori Expedition. Our objective was to climb the Northeast Ridge via the South Face to the summit of Pumori (7145 m).

The first step of our expedition was to meet our trekking agents, Thamserku Trekking Ltd., as well as to acquire all necessary food and supplies.



Pumori, South Face from base camp. Photo: Jeff Holmes.

After two busy days, we boarded a bus and headed east towards Jiri. Following local style, half of the members found sitting areas on the roof of the bus. As a note of warning, remember to keep your head down as the branches and power lines tend to be very low. This bus trip took 11 hours, but could be considerably shorter depending on the working condition of your bus. In our case, I believe the bus was afraid of heights.

We left Jiri on September 19 and hiked for eight days to Namche Bazaar (3450 m). In Namche, we had a two-day R&R break where the only exercise was bargaining. From Namche, we hiked another four days before reaching basecamp on October 3.

Basecamp (5300 m) was a sandy clearing situated between the Khumbu Glacier and the South Face of Pumori, on the edge of a small lake. The lake is reportedly sacred, so we avoided swimming or bathing in it. This is convenient, as it is also the main source of drinking water. From basecamp, a two-hour hike was required to reach Camp 1. The hike consisted mainly of scrambling along glacial moraine and alpine scree. Light hiking shoes were all that was required for this part of the climb. Camp 1 was

established on October 4 at around 5800 m on the top of a ridge adjoining the South Face. From this point on, we would be above the snow line. Although we heard and saw numerous avalanches, nothing more than a light dusting approached Camp 1.

From Camp 1 to Camp 2 we found it necessary to fix rope the entire way. The conditions varied from long, often steep snow slopes to more difficult short sections of ice and rock.

Camp 2 (6200 m), fully stocked by October 14, was located on the top of a large buttress also adjoining the South Face. There was plenty of room for at least four or five tents here. Although a beautiful spot, the avalanche danger made it difficult to relax. It was at Camp 2 that I recorded our coldest temperature, between  $-15^{\circ}$  and  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$ .

From Camp 2 the climbing started off fairly easy, leading up to a 100-m traverse across a large avalanche slope swept clear of any snow. The avalanche slope is fed by séracs located at the point where the South Face meets the Northeast Ridge. After the traverse, the climb continues up a couple of steep snow slopes, including a short section of  $80^{\circ}$  ice. The face finally drops off in angle as

you approach the col. From the col (approximately 6700 m), you have a beautiful view into Tibet. Our high point on the mountain was reached by two members just above the col on October 17.

Typical to mountaineering, the weather was not co-operating with us. The clouds would move in at around 9 a.m., quickly reducing the visibility above Camp 2. Two of our highest attempts were both driven back due to bad weather and lack of visibility. Our last attempt was abandoned shortly after leaving Camp 2, on October 20, due to the high amount of avalanche activity. Unfortunately, we had run out of time, and the following day we started to clear the mountain of all our gear. On October 22 we left basecamp to head home.

The final northeast ridge to the summit did not appear to be any more difficult than the previous climbing, although one could see numerous crevasses and séracs that would have to be negotiated. The best view of this section of the mountain could be obtained from the Everest basecamp, a two-hour walk from our base-camp.

The members of the expedition were Steve Adamson (team leader), Don Adamson, Ray Bernard, Lucille Doucette,

Everette Fee, Jeff Holmes, Greg Hull, Martin Isdale, J.C. Lavergne, Terry Lawrence, Peter Loyd, Chris Macknie, Julien Merceau, Tony McDowell, and Casey Shaw. Darlene Gillis and Jonathon Adamson (age seven) also joined us for the trek in.

Pasang Sherpa, our Sirdar, along with several other Sherpas, including an amazing cook, Songay Sherpa, helped us in travelling from Katmandu to base-camp. The Sherpas did not participate in the climb itself.

## *Ecuador 1992*

*Jim Ongena*

Ecuador remains the premier choice for those gaining experience with altitude or just taking a climbing holiday. I've traditionally done the "classics" — Pichincha, Cotopaxi, and Chimborazo, but this trip I got lucky and experienced some of the other Ecuadorian treasures. My partner was a strong young buck named Mike Dobbin who was already a climber, lacking only altitude experience.

We arrived in Quito on December 28 and spent three days being tourists while our bodies got accustomed to life at 3000 m. Pichincha was our first training day, as it gets you to a nice summit right above Quito (4790 m) and a further chance to acclimatize. Now, Quito used to be a very good place to spend time but, like many things in Ecuador, it had changed. Now, it is an awesome place to hang out and acclimatize. The city water is now treated so the "mister softies" are less common. There are more fine restaurants and sidewalk cafes with good food. The ice cream is real and edible, and bakeries are full of delicious junk food. But, best of all, they've built an artificial climbing wall right in the city with sport routes up to 5.11b. The town offers everything as well as the best, most reliable weather anywhere on earth.

Getting around is still easy and inexpensive. Taxis are everywhere and cost under a dollar, and buses are reliable and cost almost nothing. Hotels range from \$3/night up to \$15 for relative luxury. Ecuador should be on everyone's list of "places to go before I die."

Getting to the mountains is also easy, convenient, and inexpensive. You simply take a bus to the closest town and jump in a taxi or a pick-up truck that will take you up to the hut. If time is important to you, it's faster but more expensive to use a driver from Quito to take you from your hotel directly to the hut. Hugo Torres will do this from Pamir Travels and can be reached at 54-7576. Enough about the country, let me tell you about these other treasures I spoke of.

Antisana (5758 m) was our first peak. It is remote, hard to access, and not a boring snow slog. You need a permit or you won't get through the gate, a local climbing shop or club will help you with this. There is no hut, but there are route-finding challenges and many crevasses. Take a bus to the town of Pintag and get some local to drive you into the mountain. There are two routes to choose from — the normal north ridge, or the intermediate south col-ridge route. We elected to try a new route directly up the west face and got to within a snowball's throw. I actually did throw a snowball onto the summit, but damned if I could get my body up there. There was an overhanging sérac/cornice thing that I thought we could negotiate at one of two possible spots. At least, that's the way it appeared from the bottom through my binoculars. I reached the most northern (left) of the two ramps to discover it wouldn't go. High winds and a white-out discouraged me from even trying the second possibility, so we went down. It was, however, a great climb

and may be doable next year — we'll see.

We then went to Chimborazo (6310 m) and did the direct route in only 7 hours return. Most groups on this peak do the northwest flank these days and have stopped using the original southwest Whymper route. I found that the route is fine, but descending it is dangerous. The original route also becomes soft and "iffy" on the descent, but it seems safer than the northwest bowling alley. This is still a nice mountain with a good hut and a fair challenge, but the crowds might deter some people.

Cayambe (5790 m) was our final peak, and like Antisana, is less travelled and more challenging from the technical point of view. From the hut there is only one route which is full of crevasses and routefinding challenges. We once again decided to try a new route directly up the South Face. We followed the normal route until reaching the glacier, at which point we headed off to the right and were directly under the South Face. We climbed straight up through dozens of crevasses (one of which I fell into in the middle of the night) until just below the summit. The climbing was weird, scary, and never mundane; there were three false summits and it took us ten and a half hours. At one point, I had to swing out on two poorly placed tools at 5800 m — something that scares the shit out of me at 15 m, yet alone "way out there." All in all, it was a hard long day that I'll not repeat in this lifetime. This route turned out to be less pleasant than I had hoped, and I'll not recommend it as a fun one.

In conclusion, let me repeat that Ecuador is a wonderful place to spend some of your time, and hard to beat as a climbing holiday. I've decided to take groups every year in the future. Quito is also an undiscovered parapenting

Utopia with consistent good winds, great launch site, and all-day thermals. You can spend a full day above the city with just one launch.

## *Canadian Himalayan Foundation*

*Mike Galbraith*

**Foundation President**

the Canadian Himalayan Foundation is a federally registered charitable society dedicated to helping Canadian expeditions in every corner of the globe. Since its inception in 1978, the CHF has been involved in a number of ventures, offering logistical, material and financial support to several types of expeditions and ventures. It has sponsored trips and has funded mountain projects, such as the rebuilding of the Tengboche monastery after its devastating fire.

The membership of the CHF includes a number of experienced mountaineers who can provide advice on equipment and planning, and can help with liaising problems. If financial support is desired, expeditions may apply to the foundation by calling the numbers below.

One of the greatest assets of the Foundation is the gear cache in Kathmandu, currently in excellent shape. A complete list of cache gear is available from the CHF; primary items include: 2 base camp shelter tents; 10 mountain tents; a complete medical kit with Gamow bag; a complete basecamp kitchen.

The Foundation is always searching for new members, and welcomes donations from interested parties.

Contact: Mike Galbraith  
Phone (403)-233-2140  
Fax (403)-266-2685

# Obituaries

## Jacques Penel

1944-1992

Born in Paris, France, on December 23, 1944, Jacques came to Canada in 1970 from Colorado, where he had spent two years obtaining his Master's Degree in hydrology. In Quebec City he discovered skiing, rock climbing and canoeing. In 1972, he moved to Edmonton after accepting a position with Fenco Lavalin. His work with them took him to the Arctic and the Yukon. Trips to the Rockies soon became a major focus for his love of the outdoors, and he hiked, climbed, and skied with many friends from both Calgary and Edmonton. Christmas was a special time of reunion with friends at the Elizabeth Parker Hut during the 1970s and many happy holidays were spent at the hut. He joined the Alpine Club of Canada in 1976.

During his brief life, he

travelled extensively in the Middle East, Africa, Central and South America and worked for over two years in Indonesia.

Jacques married Lise in 1978. They shared not only their love of the outdoors, but also of pottery. Jacques was not only a proficient potter, but he extended his creative talents to water-colour and other visual arts. In 1983, their son, Eric, was born. As soon as Eric was old enough, he began taking trips to the mountains with Jacques and Lise. Often staying at the Clubhouse in Canmore, or at the more accessible huts, Jacques shared with his young son his love of the mountain environment. I last saw Jacques and Eric together at Bow Hut in March of 1992; they were returning from an overnight trip to Balfour Hut.

Jacques will be remembered for living his life to the fullest,

with a great sensitivity and interest in the world around him. All his mountain friends will have special memories of their times with him, and he will be greatly missed.

*Bev Bendell*

## George Hampson

1922-1992

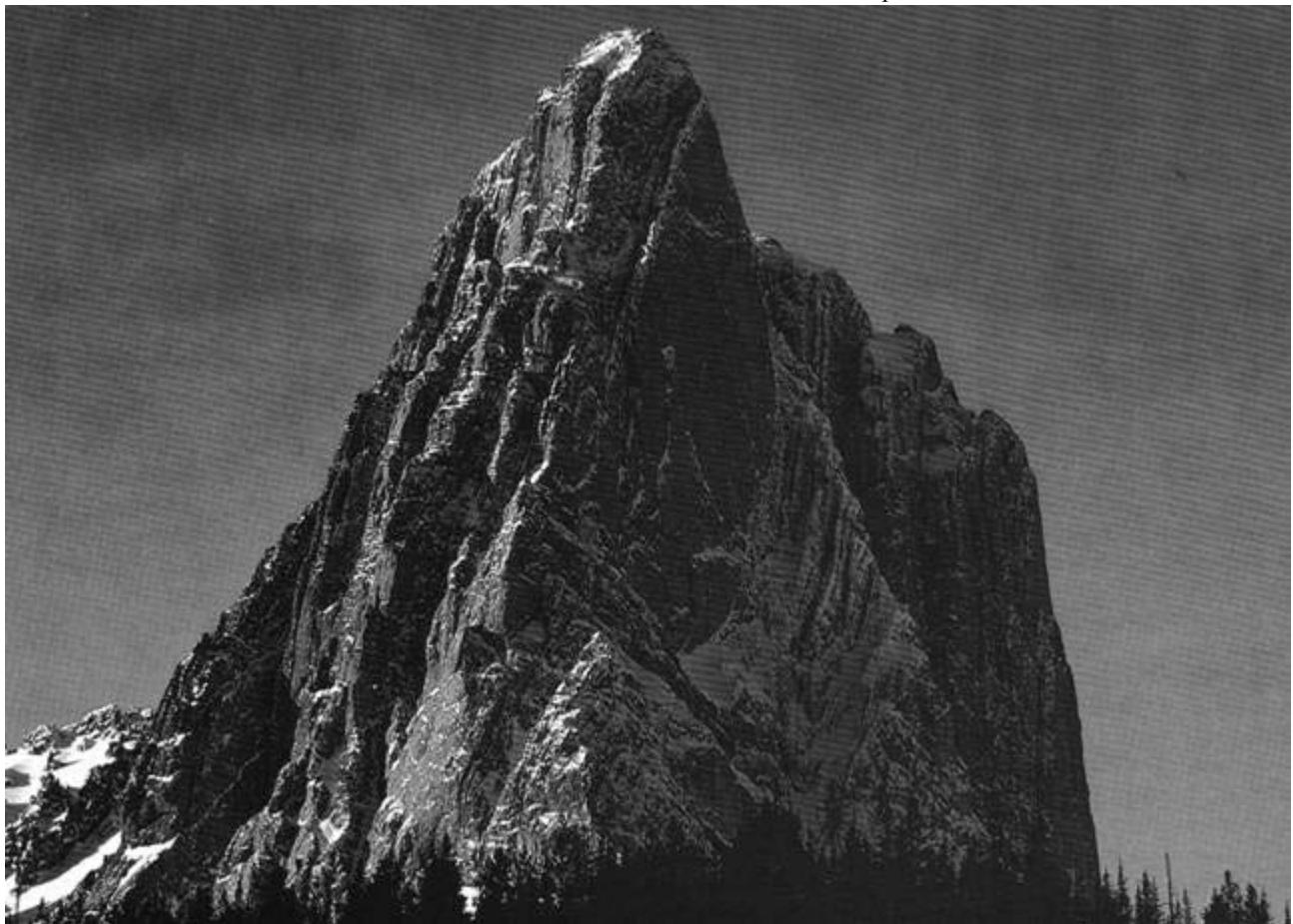
H. George Hampson died on January 23, 1992, after a long battle with myelofibrosis, at his home in Ottawa. He had been a member of the Alpine Club of Canada since 1945. He also held memberships in the Swiss Alpine Club and the Himalayan Club.

George began climbing in his youth in the Laurentians outside his home of Montreal. After mastering the art of rockcraft and pioneering a number of new routes in this area, he began venturing further afield. His pursuit of

mountaineering took him to the Canadian and U.S. Rocky Mountains, the European Alps and the Himalaya. Among his expeditions to the Himalaya was the first ascent of Ronti (6063 m), located on the periphery of the Nanda Devi Sanctuary, in 1955.

George was very much a world traveller. His journey took him from Africa to the Antarctic. These ventures were extensively documented with his camera, as he was a keen amateur photographer. In addition to eclectic personal pursuits, George served his country well, first as a lieutenant in the Royal Canadian Navy during the Second World War, then as a foreign service officer with the Canadian Diplomatic Corps. He will be sorely missed by family, friends and climbing companions.

*Philip Hampson*



Mount Louis from the air. Photo: Tim Auger.

## Lewis Reed Naylor

1905-1992

Reed Naylor was born in Arundel, P.Q., the son of Henry Alfred Naylor, an Anglican minister and one of the first priests in the Yukon during the Gold Rush. Reed went to school at Bishop's College, and worked as an investment dealer for C. M. Oliver in Montreal, Jamaica and finally in Vancouver until his retirement to the Okanagan

in 1975.

Reed joined the ACC in the 1950s and attended numerous camps in California, Rogers Pass and the Rockies in addition to innumerable outings in the Coast Range and the hills of the Okanagan.

A gifted writer and philosopher, Reed fostered a keen interest in mountaineering among his friends and family through his letters and stories.

His son Hugh became an accomplished climber while working with John Wheeler of the Geological Survey, and by sending me to my first ACC camp at age fourteen, Reed set me on the path to becoming a professional mountain guide. Reed viewed mountaineering as a metaphor for the qualities of honour, peace and diligence which he valued so much in his own and other's lives. His wit

and intelligence will be missed by many.

Reed Naylor died quietly in his home in Kelowna in November, 1992.

*Rob Whelan*

### Other Passings

*Henry Ives Baldwin*

*Muriel Gratz*

*Gerald Morton*

*Bill Harrison*

## Reviews

### State Of The World's Mountains: A Global Report

Peter B. Stone, Ed. Zed Books Ltd., London & New Jersey, 1992. 391 Pages.

(\$60.00 hard back, \$25.00 paperback)

A global report on the state of the world's mountains, this timely volume dispels the popular myth of the durability of mountain ecosystems because of their remoteness, inhospitable terrain or climate. It is an examination of the pressures brought by people which threaten or have already destroyed these fragile areas.

A Global Report is the result of work by a group called Mountain Agenda and is designed to attract attention to the serious problems facing the earth's mountainous areas. The Mountain Agenda group hopes that awareness of the dangers facing mountains will lead to sustainable mountain resource development while preserving the fragile environments and well-being of mountain inhabitants.

This report was prepared for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992. The editor, Peter Stone, was the founding editor of UN Development Forum, worked as director of information for the Brundtland Commission, and was senior information

advisor to the UN Stockholm Environment Conference in 1972. He is a member of the Alpine Club (UK).

The major mountain areas of the world are discussed, continent by continent, with areas such as Appalachia or Himalaya receiving more in-depth examinations. The report begins by discussing Africa, a continent covering 20 percent of the earth's surface. Twenty-five out of 48 African countries have specific dilemmas facing them in managing their mountain problems, with the average population density in the highlands twice that of lowland areas. Of these countries, six areas are discussed with attention to subsistence agriculture and land degradation in the highlands (which continue to encroach on the mountain environment). Traditionally, mountain areas have offered the necessary moisture for agriculture, a refuge and place of security where disease does not flourish, and land with better soils than semi-arid and lowland areas. Sustainable development in African mountains is a complex matter and is tied not only to land ownership but also to ecological, social, cultural and economic systems.

The Alps suffer from problems very different from African mountains — they are the victims of their own

success. Alpine tourism began to flourish in the Belle Époque (1880-1914) and has continued unabated to the present day. Development relating to ski resorts, the impact of mass tourism, increased traffic and resulting increase in air pollution are reducing mountain forests. Concurrently, there is an acceleration of avalanche, rockfall and landside activity affecting the valley bottoms and adjacent lowlands. Discussion in this volume of the mountain ecology and environment of the Alps focuses on the physical sciences, climate, vegetation and the potential of existing natural resources.

Human intervention has transformed the ecology of the Alps. The history of alpine land use shows a close link to general European development and the spread of agricultural societies that displaced gatherers and hunters. Historically, alpine pastures are an important part of transhumance, or the practice of making seasonal use of the alpine areas. Over time, settlement became sufficiently dense and the Alps were inhabited year-round. All types of land use in the Alps, whether pasture grazing or flood-plain reclamation, have resulted in changes in the basic ecology and severe ecosystem problems. The book suggests that modern forms of land use — tourism, water resource management,

industry, labour, and transportation — must be conducted in such a way that they do not overstrain and destroy ecological stability. Major changes in current agricultural and forestry practices within a framework involving the four political levels are necessary if there is to be a place for sustainable development in the Alps.

The Himalaya, the most fragile of mountain environments, is facing challenges from tourism and development of resource potential amidst poverty on one hand, and ecological fragility, cultural diversity, inaccessibility and natural hazards on the other. With refreshing positiveness, the authors point to the Himalaya as an example of a natural resource fully capable of sustainable development, particularly in the area of tourism. They make a broad range of suggestions for plans to effect this change.

In the Eastern Arctic Mountains, the only Canadian area discussed in this publication, an 'ultimate' wilderness exists. Despite the remoteness of the area and unlikelihood that it will see much in the way of increased visitation, land-use conflicts have already arisen between local communities and two levels of government. As adventure tourism continues to rise in remote areas such as Baffin Island and Labrador, their mountain areas will also be

subject to increased ecological disturbance.

The South American Andes cover an immense area which cannot adequately be dealt with in such a small publication as this. Instead, general discussions on the geo-ecology, sub-regional ecology, human population diversity, adaptation to altitude and settlements at high altitudes are presented.

The uncertainty facing the countries of the former Soviet Union mirrors the uncertainty facing this area's mountain regions. This area now contains 11 countries with nearly 30 percent of the land contained in highlands and mountains. Because of the wide latitudinal area covered the mountain ecologies vary from polar permafrost deserts to boreal forests and oceanic woodlands. Again, it is impossible to do justice to the cultures, development, and ecologies of such a large area in 42 pages.

Such examinations as those for Africa and Europe found in this publication detail the severity of the environmental and ecological problems facing the world's mountain areas; the conclusion is that each area presents similar yet unique problems.

There is a short section dealing with climate changes, past and future, in the mountains and the necessity for developing models to improve our assessment of these climatic changes.

Each chapter provides an extensive list of references for further study and the book is well indexed.

Mountain Agenda has undertaken a huge task, and as is pointed out, this publication is just a starting point in increasing awareness of the threats surrounding our mountain environments.

The global images of the ecological problems in mountain areas around the world provide valuable history and lessons for

Canada. Thus far, our western and northeastern mountain areas have escaped the wholesale development found in Europe. The warning signs are there.

*Bev Bendell*

## **K2: The Ultimate High**

Directed By Franc Roddam

Review Of The Film

If the screenwriters of the film K2 are correct (and they must be — this thing made a bundle of money), climbers are a pretty despicable bunch of egocentric, violent, oppressive, sexist buffoons. They live in a world where all the above qualities guarantee them a place on an expedition to the world's second highest mountain, and ensure that a series of poor, selfish decisions will be made. In the midst of beautiful scenery, they beat porters, tell each other to fuck off, threaten to sleep with tentmates' wives, and otherwise prepare themselves for a victorious summit attempt. This they finally achieve by stepping on the bodies of teammates left on the mountain. On the top, they hug in the roaring wind of helicopter rotors, forgive each other their multitude of trespasses, and descend into an inevitable hell. When the most reprehensible of the bunch (and, of course, the cutest) is faced with the crux decision of the script, he pulls through, despite a "career of selfishness," and proves to be the hero. He saves his rope mate, the rescue helicopter arrives in a blaze of music, and the movie ends. We are left to wonder if the cute guy returns to Seattle and does in fact screw his partner's wife. This wondering, come to think of it, might be the dramatic high point of the film.

On the other hand, these screenwriters may have been a little less than realistic observers of the world. A gathering of friends to create the official CAJ review of the movie revealed more than a few points in the movie which

suggested the writers may have misunderstood some minor technicalities of climbing. This quickly called into question their capacity to understand the depths of human nature as well. A few examples: adult, Himalayan-standard climbers scale buildings to impress women (well, maybe); the strong and cute guy hip-belay a pendulum traverse, moving the rope without moving his hands (well, the guy is slick.); above, he claims he's "gonna free the whole pitch!"; looking at another 2000m of mixed terrain; he especially claims he's going to climb "that roof in the overhang" (as good a place to find a roof as anywhere else); what are those six people doing under that roof anyway?; the cute guy is so cute that every time he is seen up close on flat ground, he has a different haircut than when he's seen from a distance doing hard moves; the token woman — thank God, she just ends up sitting in basecamp nurturing her boyfriend — climbed "Annapurna last summer" — the rain must have been a bitch; "On belay, Harold!" — well, not quite, you might just want to check that carabiner; "Excellent place to camp! We have to test these tents on steep ice." and get practice dying, as well; thankfully, the Professor has brought the 200 m snow stakes it would take to tie the tents in well enough to stop them in a Class 4 avalanche; when the boys argue at night, at least they've brought Coleman lanterns up the wall they "free-climbed," so we're not left in the dark; who is the Japanese guy who keeps disappearing and reappearing, despite avalanches and no place in the script; do they really climb the Moose's Tooth in tank tops? I knew I wasted my money on that duvet; thank heavens for the gentle and sensitive moment of the rope-lowered casket at the "climbers' funeral" — a

touch of reality; what height is the "death zone" anyway — he keeps saying different altitudes; the adult quality of interactions in basecamp — why were any of these guys invited on any trip?; the surprising, occasional warmth in the film — particularly the hot springs in the middle of the glacier; the seven tons of gear for six climbers - must be those damn Coleman lanterns; the injections of epinephrine — no thanks, Taylor, I'll just die without searing pain. Gee, if this movie isn't true to life, do you think I'll have to re-evaluate my Rambo collection?

Okay, so, I'm being petty. But I'll tell you what: if you're in the mood for a good climbing film, buzz through all the scenes with the cute guy, and turn off the sound except for the scene where the professor's wife tells him what a pain-in-the-ass a climber can be — she's pretty accurate. Turn the lights down low, and get ready for the second unit filming of the Waddington area; the footage is spectacular. Dream your way through the ridge to the summit; the camera work is some of the best ever. Sweat your way through the fall; hope you'll never see it closer. Turn it off before the ending gets too Hollywood, and plug in Five Days One Summer.

*Seamus O'Hooligan*

## **Scrambles In The Canadian Rockies**

Alan Kane. Rocky Mountain Books, Calgary, Alberta, 1992. 208 Pages. \$14.95 Paperback

I first met Alan Kane about ten years ago at an introductory rock-climbing class. After the first day's instruction, it became quite evident that we had two definite things in common: we both loved draft beer and watching women in tight-fitting climbing harnesses.

Since those heady days of alpine apprenticeship, I have mellowed into a semi-retired



mountain romantic, while Alan has gone on to become both an accomplished mountaineer and author.

The stated purpose of *Scrambles in the Canadian Rockies* is to bridge the gap between mountaineering and hiking. Echoing the author's own statement in the preface, I feel this is a book that many of us could have used ten years ago when the only guides available were topo maps and the vague descriptions given in the ACC guides to the Rockies.

With the publication of this book, there will undoubtedly be some protests from so-called purists who argue that another guide book will mean less adventure. The fact is, however, that in our increasingly complicated lives, most of us don't have the luxury of wasting time on unexpected "adventures" or unplanned explorations. For that reason alone, this book is a godsend for those who want to experience the solitude of the high places in as pure and uncomplicated a way as possible.

How well does Alan succeed in his stated purpose? Quite well. Aside from a few minor faults, I believe that Alan has succeeded admirably in introducing the hiker of the valley bottoms and

low passes to the high ridges and summits. In the past he or she may have previously gazed on these with a mixture of wonder and even fear, and Alan has helped to open a new door for these people. Some technical climbers may deride Alan's emphasis on caution in his grading of difficulties, but this book is not written for the technical climber. It is written



to those for whom exposure may be an unpleasantly new experience and, as any humble mountaineer will admit, even the smallest mountains are capable of being difficult in the wrong conditions.

My biggest complaint about this book concerns ascent times. In my opinion, they are too conservative, even though he states that they are based on the presumption that the climber is in good shape. There seem to be some errors of consistency

in his system as well; why is it, for example, that Castle Mountain and Big Sister are rated as taking the same amount of time, when a quick glance at a topo map shows that there is a considerable difference in distance between the two and when, in fact, the former takes most people twice as long to climb as the latter. This criticism does not mean that Alan's book

is seriously flawed; rather, it illustrates the need for the user of the book to be responsible, not only in the amount of gear he has, but also in the amount of time he allots for the climb. In this regard, all guidebooks should be suspected of being guilty until proven innocent.

The general text of the book is well laid out in an easy-to-read format, and is witty while still getting to the point. Alan has also been thoughtful enough to include a glossary of

mountaineering terms, and the photographs in the book, with a few minor exceptions, range from satisfactory to superb. The white route drawings on the photographs themselves sometimes tend to be indistinct, but as these are intended to give only a basic idea of the routes, this again is a minor criticism.

This book is the second in a continuing series of guidebooks by Rocky Mountain Books, the first being Shaun Dougherty's book, *Selected Alpine Climbs in the Canadian Rockies*. This is a well-made book that will not come apart after a few uses. It is a book that is meant for your pack, not your bookshelf — although it is so beautifully made, the bookshelf may be where you want to keep it.

Whether you are a beginner whose curiosity is just starting to outweigh your fear, or a veteran who wants the exhilaration without the epics, this book is for you. To the beginners in particular — buy it. Experience the serene pleasures of the high country it will take you to, and as Alan inscribed in my own copy: don't fall off!

*Clive Cutler*

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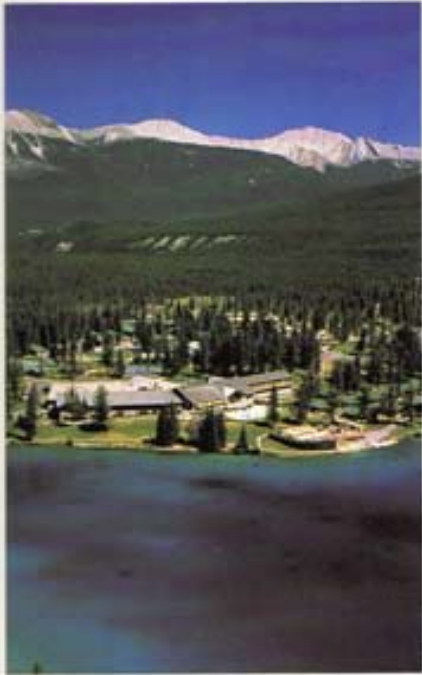
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